

[Translation] Frozen Teardrop, Chapter 5, part 1



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MC File 1

Once upon a time, there was a person who had two names. That person was the heir to a peaceful country but sought revenge for the country's destruction; so he put on a helmet/mask, changed his name, and became a legendary hero in a certain army. That person now says he will purge the foolish people. Why does he choose to do this? And--- isn't this [person/place/period/idk] completely pacifist? Or is this the instinct of a hero? This person presumably truly hates peace. Perhaps he hates his little sister who carries on her father's dying wish for peace. Still, no one can be sure of his real intent.

AC 195 - Dorothy

MC-0022 Next Winter

I don't have a name. I have no past. I was nothing but a mere expendable that could be thrown away. My youth was spent like nothing so much as a [dirty] old rag. For as long as I can remember, I've had to make like a terrorist just to survive the rough streets (lit: land) of Mars. I never felt any particular inconvenience [about not having a name], but the guys around me seemed to care and somewhere along the line, they took to calling me 'Nanashi.'

Basically 'history' doesn't exist. That's the same as me not having a name. The concept of 'history' is historians and historical scholars comparing historical data, understanding it, at the time those records are spoken in some form, 'history' is, from the start, what 'existed.' We who have given ourselves up to space and its (flush) of time are unable to understand the current condition of 'history.' First of all, the word 'history' is unclear as it doesn't distinguish between 'human history' or 'Earth history' or 'history of the solar system,' we don't know from whose point of view [this history] is being told from or by whom it is given a voice. Supposedly a thing owned collectively by man, as long as [it is] historians and historical scholars as opposed to something like 'god' speaking, then their personal subjectivity cannot help but [affect the telling of] history. That is why I don't trust the 'past' which [is usually considered] 'history.' No, I cannot find the value in the mere past. Maybe my feelings would be more clearly expressed with a straight forward 'whatever.' And if man believes, as I do, that the 'past' has no value, [then] 'history' isn't a collective possession and 'time' is nothing but a disposable expendable.

The Mars Federal Government announced 'Mars Independence' to the United Earth Sphere five years ago. [One] Martian revolution [around the sun] corresponds to about two Earth years. So in Earth time, it was about ten years ago. The Mars Federal Government representative was the first [Mars] President: Milliardo Peacecraft. He, who had been selected by the citizens of Mars, won the Mars government its autonomy [by] repeated negotiations with tenacious Earth; eluding the sabotage of the for-profit business organizations of/for Mars' development; not [resorting] to such extreme measures as a war of independence; and without spilling so much as a single drop of blood. In that [declaration of] independence, the people living on Mars pronounced themselves Martians [ALT: In that declaration of independence, [Milliardo] gave the name Martians to the people living on Mars, after what they had called themselves.] Furthermore, people came to be able to live on Mars and it was this time that they took to calling it "Mars Century," retroactive from when the first firm steps [at colonization] were taken [#1]. There had been, until that point trouble (lit: a hitch) in daily life caused by Earth's AC calendar conversion system which used colony standard time, and there was a need to [align] the length of a year ((687 days)) and the length of one day ((24 hours 37 minutes)).

It was this time more than any other that separated the history [#2] of Earth and Mars.

However, from around this time, peace and order on Mars began to fall apart. Differential society dissatisfaction was on the verge of exploding. In just a few short years, disputes had started across the land. Inaugural [start up?] enterprises began crushing themselves. The (ditch) between the Anti-Earth Sphere and Pro-Earth Sphere factions was deep, and while the federal government leaders (who were going to unify) kept the tides of war blurred by standing neutral, the suppression of fighting and maintenance of peace went from the police system to the military organization. The chain of hatred among nations (lit: races) coming from different faiths and ethnicities also continues. So the victims retaliated and as a result they cried for revenge; the situation was an eternal ball [as in dance] that unfolded night after night with no end in sight. It's believed that the peace keeping system likely didn't cover [all] the Earth Sphere yet (and that's what caused the trouble). For the people of Mars, they started to feel that if it was going to come to this, it would have been better if they hadn't become a free state.

Another year passed [MC-0018]. A mars year, that is.

MC-0021 First Winter

At Elysium island near the Mars equator, a large (scale) conference [among] leaders was being held in the (federal government central city) Relena City. Several VIPs from Earth had been invited. Presidential aide Lady Une, ambassador Sylvia Noventa were in attendance. The "Little Prince" [#3]-- a frozen hibernation capsule-- was set up in the back-most chairperson's seat of the hall. A single rose was among the [bed of] thorns, and albeit an imitation, it was beautiful. An eternally beautiful little girl slept within. She rendered distinguished service to the Mars Terraforming, Relena Peacecraft did. She had encountered trouble on the passage from Earth to Mars and [has since] been sleeping in the hibernation capsule; that's what I heard, but the details have never been officially disclosed. Milliardo, the first president of the Mars Federal Government, stood in front of the capsule and, facing the government leaders and VIPs from every country, began his address. He whitewashed over peace and history [ALT: Whitewashed the why-fors and what-where's of peace and history]. I was a part of the security detail and stood in the very front [of the audience] with my back to (that) President Milliardo. In the middle of the address, the order came. Suddenly, explosions [rocked] all over the conference room. Just as planned. It was the timing device my comrades had taught me. With the conference room in an uproar, it was our job to guide President Milliardo and the SP [#4] to a safe place; that was my official stance (lit: face) to the end. I shouted, "THIS WAY!" At the same time, I pulled out my pistol, aimed at my target and pulled the trigger. The silencer rang out a dry machine sound [#5] and the bullet shot clean through Milliardo's wrinkled brows. Instantaneously, there was another explosion somewhere else. That, too, was as planned. I took advantage of the melee and fled outside the conference room. Immediately I ditched the officer's uniform and pulled my favorite knit cap low over my eyes. The hat had frayed threads here and there and my comrades teased me about having a worn out rag sitting on my head. It was unmistakably me who had killed Milliardo Peacecraft. I was raised as a terrorist, the only thing I had been taught was how to destroy authority. But I wasn't interested in politics. It was just a matter of my bosses telling me to do it and I did it [ALT: when my bosses said 'jump' I asked 'how high.']. I wondered where the group who made them move was. Earth sphere radicals and Mars development business foundations stripped of their vested rights and a secret organization called Preventer.... what interest were [any of] those to me, the tail of the lizard [which is easily cut off #6]? I ran through downtown with its small-scale swarm of tent-like residences. I ran like the devil was after me. But the (garrison) had blocked [my way]. The terrorists who were supposed to be my comrades were also looking for me. Betrayal and destruction of evidence was our usual modus operandi. There was nothing I could do but run. No other way save to continue my flight. This time, it would likely be my turn [as the target] (lit: to be killed). I couldn't trust my intended escape route. Calling upon my rock climbing skills, I clambered up a wall and took refuge in the ventilation of [some] house (I'd never seen before). Terrorists have a habit of infiltrating the underground [areas]. Even so, I went ahead and (prowled around behind/in the ceiling) and somehow managed to escape the pursuit of the garrison and my former comrades [#7]. I bore hunger and thirst, but weathered it out for several days. Nevertheless, places for me to take

refuge steadily became fewer and fewer. It had probably been a week since the [assassination]. In the uproar, I had been seen by people totally unrelated [to the incident]. They tipped off the (garrison). It would be possible to kill them before I got reported, but I got disgusted by the thought of killing someone just so I could keep going. I understood that there was nowhere in [all of space] where I deserved to live [alt: was worthy of living]. Regardless, I still had a touch of instinct that made dying at the hands of another rather distasteful. I think I'd rather use this gun and blow myself to kingdom come.

"....."

I looked at my watch. It was nearly the time Phobos-- disrupted as it was by the sun-- could be seen passing. I often compared myself and this Phobos. The name means "fear" in Greek mythology. I had the sensation that "phobos" was passing through me at present [#8]. The Martian moon Phobos ran contrary to the usual clockwise rotation of normal stars, it moved counter-clockwise [that's for the idiot note, Sumizawa!]. The satellite rose in the West and set in the East. It's a phenomenon caused by spinning at a higher speed than the rotational velocity of Mars. But its speed is also relatively fast [ergo] two or three times a day it can be seen (plunging) before the slowly moving sun from the opposite direction. And awaiting us (lit: less than fifty thousand years in the future) is its collision with Mars('s atmosphere) and the ring which will subsequently form from all the little pieces [of Phobos]. I believed with all my heart that [our] foolish existence continued to go against the flow of time.

"I'm not the only odd fellow."

I liked seeing (the scene of) that jet-black moon crossing-- no stabbing-- the pure white sun like [it was] a warped bullet.

"It wouldn't be too late if I died after seeing him [#9] off, eh....." I said creeping out from the attic of the tent house. Standing on the solar panel-covered roof, I looked over the panoramic [view of] Mars. Dust-filled gales blew across [the land]. The sky was covered with a thick layer of clouds: I could confirm neither the sun nor Phobos. I couldn't even see "Frozen Teardrop," as the second moon (or satellite) was so-called for its resemblance to a frozen teardrop. Things didn't go as I'd thought they would. I even laughed.

"Huh..... that's how it's gonna be, huh." I muttered and pressed the muzzle of the gun to my temple. I shed no tears. Naturally. My tears had long ago been frozen. Then, I heard the sorrowful tones of a violin (at my back). I inhaled sharply as I turned around, ".....?" There was a tall man with long bangs standing there with his arms crossed. He was as scholarly type man, thin and close to past middle age [#10]. And a young boy about my age sat at the man's feet playing the violin. Or probably a girl as she was wearing a skirt. She [also] had on goggles. The song was Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade." My holding a gun didn't phase those two, they stayed as they were for a while. I fixed my aim to the man's forehead. Glaring down the muzzle of my gun, the man slowly raised both hands. He seemed to indicate he would not attack, but there was no carelessness in the movement and his eyes were filled with seething anger. The girl finished her violin performance and removed the goggles. She wore glasses under the goggles. It was considerably conscientious [of her] to want to protect [her] big, blue eyes from the dust clouds of Mars. I thought to ask them who they were but the man began to speak first.

"I also don't have a name, but if you must call me something, call me Doktor... T."

Also? The man calling himself Doktor knew that I didn't have a name. The girl, holding the violin under her arm, giggled.

"Isn't it inconvenient to not have a name?"

"This young lady is Katrine Wood Winner..... daughter of the house of Winner.," said Doktor in a calm tone.

"However, you'd best take care..... neither one of us is as gentle as we appear." I wondered where exactly they'd appeared gentle. [ALT: I wondered where exactly they'd appeared from at all #11] Keeping my gun trained [on them], I affected a calm air.

"What do you two think you know about me?" Those were the first words I spoke when I met the Doktor and Katrine.

"You are me," Doktor lowered his hands and barely moved his thin lips. "I know everything." That sharp look [of his] shot straight through me (lit: my heart) like an arrow. "[You] don't bare your fangs at those who are not your enemy..... you're a docile man."

Point my gun as much as I liked, I couldn't [bring myself] to pull the trigger. The Doktor-- it was like he saw through me.

"Do you know who I've killed?"

"Milliardo Peacecraft died in AC 195, [he died] in battle at the last Earth Sphere war; the Eve Wars. What you killed was merely the spirit (alt: soul or apparition) of a dead man."

"That's ancient news," I wasn't such a simpleton as to so easily believe old stories like those that are written in textbooks, and I didn't care about history. I never went to school and so had practically no proper education. I'd come this far without having won so much as love or affection or what have you.

"Well, shall we talk about what happens now?" Asked Katrine with a smile on her face. "There are three options available to you." Slowly she stood up and brushing dust from her skirt, spoke dispassionately. "The first is to commit suicide here....." I realized that instrument could not be [just an instrument (lit: negligent)]. "Another is to go into town and be killed by someone." I stood at the ready, aiming the muzzle of the gun at Katrine when she began talking; I interrupted her speech.

"I don't think there's any other way." Then, suddenly, I noticed the gentle light radiating from Doktor's eyes. Unknown words like father and mother cut across my mind.

"What you need is a place to call home." Never had I ever been looked upon with such kind eyes. "Wouldn't a third option be coming with us?" That shook my feelings. But I, like my ragged old knit cap, was still cold and dark and deeply suspicious.

"How did you find me (lit: know this place)?" A freezing red wind blew through.

"The lady..... her instincts are sharp."

"It's too bad [we] couldn't see Phobos, isn't it, Mr. I-Don't-Have-A-Name..... I wanted to see the sun being stabbed, too."

"....." I decided to give it up. There was no where to hide if they could see through every thing and anything. I surmised they weren't from my former terrorist organization nor were they the government's people. Assuming there truly was a third option, I thought I'd have them tell me. I had a dim memory of something surely French-- *troisime chemin* or something. When I thought of such an unnecessary thing, I realized I was already completely defeated.

"....." Without saying a word, I stuck my gun out to Katrine. She accepted it with a kind smile and in return, passed me the violin she'd been holding.

"Salam [#12], Mr. I-Don't-Have-A-Name." The violin was a genuine instrument. I had thought it might have been concealing some kind of weapon but apparently I had been unnecessarily borrowing trouble.

"Yeah.... Zdravstvuj [#12]." I, like Doktor T had just done, raised both hands without putting the violin down. The choice to live necessitated considering myself as a captive.

"Don't do that, we're friends [#13], see?" Behind her glasses, Katrine's earnest eyes appealed [to me] strenuously. Much later I heard that Doktor T had once gone by the name "Nanashi." Indeed, I thought I really probably was [the

same as] that Doktor T.

I boarded a small hovercraft and left Elysium Island. After the Utopia Sea, we crossed the Acidalia Sea [note: there is an eponymous plain] and continued on South. [Since] I had nothing to do, I tried to play a waltz on the violin I'd received. It was a song I dimly recalled from when I was a little boy. Katrine came to listen.

"What's that song called?"

I didn't know.

"Renya no butoukai..... 'Endless Waltz', [#14] " said Doktor T quietly. "[We'll] have to change that waltz to a requiem sometime."

I was surprised when they took me to a little circus. It was on an isolated island (floating) in the Chryse Sea; I didn't think patrons would come to such a remote place. Was I supposed to work here? I supposed it was something an (old rag [this is the same thing he calls his hat]) like me could do, right? At the center of the little tent were lion and elephant gages; a trapeze and tight rope were suspended, slack, from the canopy. We crossed the stage and continued on backstage. There was a cramped office. There to meet us was a silver-haired gentleman with the same eyes as Katrine. I surmised this man was likely the head of the Winner household.

"Oh, that was quick, wasn't it." He had the exact (refreshingness :D) of a youth.

"It was fun, you should have come, too, (big) brother."

"No, I'm not used to Mars' (open) air." They were siblings with a pretty big age gap. "'Snow White' and 'Warlock' took up a lot of my time, too....." His manner of speech was just like that of a youth's but I could completely agree to [seeing] these two as father and daughter. "You're (young master) Nanashi, right?" Said the silver-haired man as he held out a cup of coffee in my direction. "I'm Double-U..... Professor W." I took that to be the Winner 'W.'

"Doktor, what is your 'T' short for?" I asked as I drank my coffee. Saying no more than necessary seemed to be this man's [T's] prerogative (lit: characteristic).

"It's Trowa," Professor W answered with an affable [look to his] face.

Doktor T, however, denied that, "No, it's not T for Trowa. T for Triton....." Either way, they meant the number 'three', thought I; it didn't matter much to me.

"So what of this third path I was supposed to take?"

"About that," Professor W said as he booted up a holomonitor. "[Unfortunately] the state of affairs has surpassed what we had predicted..... I want you to see this." The final resting place of Milliardo Peacecraft appeared [on the screen]. The family was crying before the coffin. "Ms. Noin's anxiety is never ending....." Professor W muttered as he watched the screen. The image confirmed the widow Lucretia and the twins born to Milliardo, Naina and Milu, wearing mourning clothes. The kids were maybe a touch older than myself. [I] was caught with a slightly guilty conscious. "But you don't need to worry about [that]," Professor W touched the screen,"..... look carefully." [He] zoomed in on the picture and increased the resolution. Neither Miss Lucretia nor the twins (named Naina and Milu) were crying. All of them, they were only touching their handkerchief to their eyes.

"When you look at their eyes, you can tell [his] being killed was planned in advance." Doktor T, who was standing alone and leaning against the wall spoke coldly. "The problem is the man standing in the rear of the family....." The clip was paused and the man in question[’s image] was enlarged. In a black suit and black sunglasses stood a young man with long blonde hair and a unique air all his own. He had the impression of an SP bodyguard more than

that of a government man. No, a military man is more like it.

"I want you to really remember his face..... he was in the secret service controlled directly by the President."

From over by the wall, Doktor T said quietly, "---Merquise." I couldn't quite catch what he said, but I remember it [sounded] like a person's name. "With your murder of the Mars Federal President Milliardo Peacecraft, both powers of the reformist and conservative factions have balanced....."

"Balanced?"

"Yes. Essentially, the revolutionaries were supposed to make great advances until the next president was elected."

"Then why are they in a state of equilibrium?" asked Katrine as she wiped her glasses.

"Most of the important members of the revolutionary faction have died..... he went to the Lanagrin Republic as a representative," Professor W changed the image on the holomonitor. He pulled up [an image] of the young man with long blonde hair we'd just seen. This time, the sunglasses were off, his well-proportioned face announced, and he was wearing the deep green clothes of a military uniform.

"That was three days ago..... it was broadcast today."

"I am Special Officer First Class Zechs Merquise. We of the Lanagrin Republic [wish to] announce [first] our declaration of secession from the Mars Federation and our independence and [second] we have decided to declare war against the Mars Federation."

He kept talking ironically about the 'abolition of Earth's rule [over Mars], and development of the upper classes,' and 'the masses are coming together.'

"That's Zechs alright," this time I could clearly hear Doktor T's words.

"Your third options was to take up our ideals (lit: will) and fight for all the people who couldn't fight."

"I'm the guy who's [acting as a dampener] to prevent the spread of the flames of war, right?" Katrine winked cutely at me. I thought it was just as I feared, I was going to be a clown.

"But the war had already begun," and I stated my position, "I'm a terrorist. War isn't my thing [which is why he thinks he's going to be a clown: what is a terrorist to the war effort?]."

"You'll be trained..... as a pilot." So saying, the Doktor turned his back on me. "This way..... let's show you your machine."

"?" I went after him and got in the elevator that went to the subterranean hangar.

An algae [able to] withstand dryness [dehydration?] was discovered on Jupiter's Europa moon and [because of it] the Mars terraforming progressed by leaps and bounds. 200 years ago Earth time, Mars gradually became warmer due to the greenhouse effect caused by the man-made freon (CFC?) atmosphere, but there remained a [considerable] level of carbon dioxide that made respiration impossible. [What's more], just a slight warming [had?] melted the polar caps, but the water was immediately absorbed by the [soil (lit: sucked up to the subterranean)] and in the winter, the newly formed ocean had reverted back into a desert. AC era space developmental researcher Lana Green was the first person to think of using "Europa algae" on Mars. At the time, "Europa algae" was a big discovery in science, but it had no practical uses in daily life and was dangerous stuff that posed a threat to the planet Earth. The Europa algae far below the ice in the deep sea, upon being exposed to sunlight, multiplied-- with surprising speed-- a plankton commonly known as "Jupiter moss." Propagating this "Jupiter moss" on Mars greatly

accelerated the warming and greening (note: the moss helped make it possible for more plants to survive). It was predicted that by these means, the terraforming could be done in a few decades instead of a few hundred years. Despite this, the intelligentsia in the early days of the AC era did not put this plan into action for fear of environmental destruction on a global scale. There was, however, an accident (some time). One of the several resource satellites that was brought to Earth left its orbit and managed to crash into Mars. (Essentially/Normally), that resource satellite should have been called a "MO-VII." It fell in Argyre plain in Mars's southern hemisphere. Likewise, the Hellas plain is also in the southern hemisphere too, but in this plain in quite ancient times [experienced] a collision with a meteorite. There, another resource satellite fell and a (double formed) crater of huge [proportions] was formed. The problem was the ice inside that resource satellite. "Jupiter moss" grew and multiplied rapidly. The people living on Mars for the para-terraforming didn't notice slow environmental change [that was happening] outside [their] domes [#15]. Sandstorms continued to howl, the red earth and sky remained unchanged. In the Mars ground water, moss continued to grow, [the people living on Mars only] seemed to notice when the average temperature seemed to rise. And within a few short years, half the deserts of Mars filled with ocean water. Blue [note: this word is the same kind of blue used to describe Katrina and Quatre's eyes] water filled the Argyre double crater and it became a large lake, or rather an ocean. The oxygen (density) rapidly went up. From the inception of Jupiter moss in the double Argyre crater to the ocean that came to replace it, that body of water came to be known as the "Lana Green Sea" and (moreover) a huge manmade island was constructed there and that was the birth of the "Lanagrin Republic."

The elevator stopped at the lowest level. There was a (vast) hangar and factory. When the doors opened, there stood a huge, and despite being just a skeletal structure, obviously man-shaped machine. There were two of those works-in-progress there.

"So this is an MS ((mars suit))?"

"No, this is an MS ((mobile suit))."

I thought it didn't matter what they were called if the abbreviation was the same. The MTF ((Mars TerraForming)) was a two-legged manipulator-equipped machine used to reform Mars and had been in use since the para-terraforming days. The MTF was called a Mars Suit after it was modified for battle and the one who had (diverted it) for military purposes was the President Milliardo whom I had killed. To suppress disputes that [were occurring] all over the place, I can't deny it was necessary to possess overwhelming military power. Also, if you consider [how] sandstorms (accompany) Mars magnetism, it's obvious to employ giant humanoid weapons operated by pilots. Yet as long as the MS weapons were around, peace had not/never come to the people.

"Mobile suit?" I repeated that word, [just having] heard it for the first time.

"That's what they're called on Earth."

"Well, okay....." Why did I get the feeling there was some fear/danger in Doktor T's eyes? Mobile suits were..... 'Manipulative Order Build and Industrial Labor Extended Suit' abbreviate that to [just] the first letters of the words and you get 'MOBILE Suit.' [#16] It was probably better (lit: straight forward) to stick with the "Mars Suit" that means "Mars Suit." Taking a deep breath, Doktor T said the names of the two suits, "This one is 'Prometheus' and that one is 'Scheherazade'." [One was t]he God who, by giving man fire, incurred the wrath of the gods and was branded as a traitor. [The other was a (beautiful queen who), f]or the sake of soothing the heart of a king who repeatedly slaughtered [stuff], told him fairy tales night after night. Greek mythology and Arabian Nights. There wasn't a single point in common between the two. Katrina had played 'Schederazade' on the violin, was that her trying to allude (lit: show off) to her machine? But they'd been given such weird names.

"Was the naming an interest of yours?"

"They were code names on the blueprints..... I don't care for them, but it's inconvenient when something doesn't

have a name." That [last art] was for my benefit, do doubt.

"Which one will I use?"

"The young lady fancies (riding) Scheherazade, yes?"

"I don't know..... she might feel that way but that Professor is against it."

"Are they really siblings?"

"From here on out, if you're going to ask questions, ask yourself..... you're not as naive as you think."

"....." Plausible explanation: their father's genes were kept somewhere and decades later, the little sister was born from a test tube. That was all I could come up with. That, or they were playing a joke and making fun of me. Both [explanations] had their merits, but I didn't have the faintest idea if either one was true. And I realized it ultimately wasn't of any concern to me. I'd asked a meaningless question. It was a waste of time.

"Is that the kid you chose to succeed you?"

Overhead, a woman's voice echoed. Looking up, at the very top of the structured bones of the MS, a beautiful woman who wore the costume of a circus prima dona-- and wore it well-- was smiling. Just when I thought her long, wavy hair was bouncing (lit: shaking flexibly), she jumped suddenly and cart wheeled like an acrobat on the iron rod close to the ceiling and [then] as she flew into the air, she spun round and round in an eight and a half flip with a twist [before] alighting on a thin cord of wiring directly above our heads. [She had] marvelous physical ability/strength, and was sure of balance.

"Nice to meet you, boy."

Firm muscle, perfect proportions, peerless beauty, graceful carriage. She was flawless. I gazed at her beauty in rapture, I couldn't so much as speak, the words were caught in my throat.

"....."

Then, suddenly, I was knocked off my feet. When did [I?/she?] come down? She stood before me with her fist clenched in my face.

"Introduce yourself properly."

For a second, I didn't know what had happened but I was sitting with my butt on the floor and felt the pain of my cheek swelling.

"Please be nice, sister."

"If you don't train kids and animals properly when they're small, they'll turn out like the bump on a log you are!"

"Nanashi..... this is your trainer, Catherine Bloom."

"Miss! Miss Catherine!"

Doktor T had called her (older) sister, but she certainly didn't look [like the same age as he]. Saying she was in her forties-- no, just starting her thirties-- wouldn't be (a stretch) of the imagination [#16.5] And she had an excellent punch, despite hitting so hard, she hadn't [made me] bleed. But it really was a heavy hit. I stood up feeling woozy. She was taller than me.

"Pleased to meet you, ma'am [#17]." When I said that, Catherine's fist exploded across my face gain.

"MISS Catherine! Or Lady [#18] Catherine to you! I'll give no quarter the next time you call me ma'am!"

A perfect knockout. I hadn't been forgiven yet. Ever since I was a kid, I'd been punched by all kinds of people but now that I thought about it, I'd never been punched by a woman. I could hear Catherine and Doktor T talking: [it sounded as if they were] far away.

"What level [do you want him at]?"

"'Sleeping Beauty'."

"Time frame?"

"It will be 750 days until we complete the mobile suits..... we want him ready by then."

"You want an 'S class Triple A' [guy] in such short order.... that kid'll die you know."

"He won't die."

"Okay, when do we leave?"

I guessed the training wouldn't be here [at the circus].

"There's a shuttle in the hangar one floor up..... it'll probably take about six months to reach Earth's orbit."

But to reach Earth would take longer.

"It's not worth training [him] on Mars for its weak gravity."

For the first time in my life, I was leaving Mars. I wasn't broken up over it. Before I knew it, Catherine's training had begun on the shuttle. In addition to basic strength training in zero gravity (in activities) outside the ship and extreme gravity in accelerated Gs, I was taught how to pilot and dock [the ship] at stops along the way. The most surprising thing was that, in figuring out how far it was to Earth's orbit, I had to [do the calculations] with a pencil, not a computer. If it was just a problem of gravity [I/we] didn't have to go all the way to Earth but Federal monitoring satellites patrolled the area around Mars and for fugitives like me (([and] the Doktor [and his group] were probably the same)) had no place where we could let down our guard.

The small planet hopper (lit: small interplanetary navigation vessel) we were to use to get to Mars was named Phobos. Doktor T picked the name because 'it's inconvenient for things to not have a name after all'. Surely he was alluding to myself. During the 180 days [it would take] to reach Earth, pilot training was just what they called my drills, mainly I used just circus equipment [note: and the aforementioned flight skills, obviously]. I thought they really were going to make me into a clown or an acrobat. Upon arriving at Earth, the real training commenced at a small, unpopulated (colony [note: seems to be some kind of enclosed area on Earth]) that had been laid to waste. I mastered juggling, balancing on a ball, tightrope walking, and the like; but for me, under gravity three times grater than Mars', the trapeze was really tough. I failed many times and crashed to the ground. Every time that happened, I was put into a medical capsule that was [designed] for restoring stamina and (medical) treatment.

"Couldn't you put up a safety net for me?"

"That would take too much time..... learn by doing (lit: learn/remember with your body)."

"..... got it." I stopped counting the (placed I'd) broken bones when I reached fifty. After a few days, Catherine brought in cloned lions and tigers and even bears.

"It wasn't easy get these and they're just on loan, so treat your partners with respect."

Clones though they may have been, they were still wild animals. Even though I wanted to be respectful, that was a proposition I couldn't take. From the start, I had no intention of keeping track of the fang and claw scars. It was the knife throwing training that really got me in the head. Since Catherine herself served as my target, of course I would have to be the one to throw, but she'd [be the one to] get hurt if I made just one mistake. I was fairly good [at doing things] so I was sure my life wasn't in danger but [what if] push came to shove? What's more, there was a big possibility my ability to adjust/adapt my strength levels were out of whack thanks to the change in gravity. I had hesitated too long and Catherine walked right up to me and took away the knives.

"Stand over there..... don't move." Catherine moved to the opposite side and threw all eight knives at once. Although I was standing in the middle of it, each of the eight knives made an arc and hit the big spider board [19] cum target.

"I'll have you hitting the target with three times the knives at five times the distance by the time you go home....."

"....."

"Oh, and the gravity will double." That was six times Mars' gravity. Each day's special training schedule consisted of nothing but severe [drills]. I seriously thought I was going to die. But each time Catherine looked me straight in the eye and encouraged me.

"It wouldn't be impossible if you did it like your life depended on it..... if you use your natural kinetic vision [note: this might be "hand eye coordination"] and the physical strength we're going to develop to it's maximum potential, then you can certainly do this." I felt like I could do it when [she] put it that way. "If you can do this in 200 days, I'll give you a reward." When I actually tried, I cleared the exercises in 150 days.

"Good work, Nanashi....." Catherine gave me a banana. I was nothing if not a terrorist. When she said 'reward' I could only imagine [that she had meant] 'cash.' Thinking about how hard I'd worked for the sake of [getting a banana], it didn't feel like much of a reward [at all].

"You don't like it?"

I didn't say anything, thinking I'd get another punch if I said what I really felt.

"Well, we'll start the new training." Under those circumstances, with a new bar set [a little higher], the new training began. The wild beasts were [conspicuously absent]. I thought it was because their (rental) period had ended; I was wrong. Catherine controlled the air within the colony and had changed the air pressure and oxygen levels. It was [now] the same as [being] at the peak of an 8,000 meter mountain. The low oxygen, air pressure, and temperature were the threshold of human survival. Under those conditions I had to do the trapeze walk. Over the next fifty days, I learned to do those perfectly also.

"You did well, Nanashi....." This time [she] gave me an apple.

"Catherine..... I'm training for my own sake. So....." I [tried] to tell her I didn't need a prize.

"Okay, then I'll give you an appropriately difficult training scheme....." Meaning it hadn't been difficult thus far. "So this time, we'll triple the gravity." That was nine times Mars gravity, but Catherine smiled through it all. I cleared that in fifty days and then moved on to zero gravity training and lunar training [note: not sure if Catherine fiddled with the colony air settings or they actually went to the moon]. My body (became able) to respond to [little] changes in gravity and low oxygen and low air pressure.

One day, Doktor T sent the order to return home.

"Sister, there's been a sudden change in circumstances..... I want you to finish Nanashi's (preparation) after you've returned here."

We weren't within range to speak in real-time so the [message] was one sided, more like a video than a phone call. But if you thought about it, Doktor T was a man who always spoke one-sidedly.

"The new president of the Mars Federation has been elected..... [and] it [means] Mars will live up to the meaning of its name: the God of War."

The video cut to a clip of the president giving the inaugural speech. The president was a woman. She wore a full dress uniform of pure white that recalled to mind the magnificence of a noble family. Also, she hid her eyes by donning a hemet (style mask).

"I am Relena, the newly elected second president of the Mars Federal Government. I am also the younger sister of the first president, Milliardo Peacecraft."

I thought it was a bad joke. Wasn't Relena Darlian supposed to be sleeping in the frozen capsule? It was curious that she wore a helmet but I thought the name was simply a lie [alt: her putting on airs].

"Out of respect to my late brother's dying wishes, and true to [my] campaign pledge, I believe (I shall) bring Special Commander First Class Zechs Merquise to the negotiation [table in order to] attain peace with the Lanagrin republic," said the female president as she removed her helmet. "And, as per my other campaign promise, I shall now reveal my face."

The face under the mask was that of a pretty, young girl.

"Relena....." Catherine muttered. "No doubt that is Relena Darlian."

"My name is Relena Peacecraft. Starting today, I [purport that] my Mars Federal Government will be a demilitarized, nonviolent 'total pacifist' [nation]."

Peacecraft? Seems like it wasn't Darlian after all.

Total pacifism? She probably honestly believed she could gain followers (lit: get partners to acquiesce) with that castle in the sky.

"She's [lucky], to always be so young."

"I think [you're young]."

"I don't [need] empty flattery," said Catherine as she mussed my hair (by spinning my knit cap hard 'round my head). I have never given empty flattery.

Catherine sighed and with a smile, she murmured, "So, let's go home to the 'God of War'."

After close to three hundred days training on Earth, we left in a hurry and headed for Mars' orbit straight away on the planet hopper 'Phobos'. During this time, my physical strength had improved by leaps and bounds. But more than that, it was my way of thinking that had the bigger [change]. Somehow, the circus training had allowed my thought process to account for any and all situations the future may present and to handle it calmly no matter what the outcome. It became my custom to act [in accordance to] that line of thinking. I had to thank Catherine. People often screw up (their reactions) in 'unexpected situations.' But if you ask me, that's nothing but [a person's] 'lack of imagination'. I [myself] often used to follow orders from above without (a second thought). When I assassinated President Milliardo, too, I imagined [everything down] to the escape route, but I didn't predict the betrayal of my

comrades. I was one lucky bastard to have escaped, however miserable and clumsy. When I make a move, I analyze my skills, prepare as many patterns for the future as I can think of, and I do a simulation. Then, I execute my move. If I should encounter a situation which exceeds [all of my] predictions, it would be for want of my imagination and as a personal responsibility, I would accept the result. If, for example, the result would spell my death, that would be the worst simulation I [could have] chosen [but] nothing to regret. My actions lost their confusion and hesitation. Yet the ship's name was 'Confusion [note: or fear or whatever].'

***end part 1

NOTES

#1 - Mars Century. So they started using MC after 17 Mars years (or about 34 AC years had passed according to Nanashi's ROUGH guide). I'm *still* not entirely convinced that means ONLY 34 years have passed since the end of Endless Waltz because as Nanashi also says the era was "retroactive from when the first FIRM STEPS" were taken for colonization.

#2 - maybe it's just me, but it sure seems INSANELY stupid for Nanashi to refer to "history" after explaining how history didn't exist in his reality for about a page.

#3 - The folks at zeonic has contested the translation of this. In Japanese, it literally says "the star prince" or "the prince of stars." True, this is the Japanese title to the famous book called "The Little Prince" in English. It apparently was originally written in French with the title "Le Petit Prince" and while I'm no Francophone, I know enough about the language to know "petit" means "small" or "little." The real questions are: does Sumizawa KNOW the title of the book is actually "little" and does he CARE the title of the book is not "prince of stars"? Given how much allusion there is to other real people, places, and events I am going to work under the assumption that he does mean this book and I'm going to use the actual (English/French translation) name for the book. As far as Frozen Teardrop goes being a SPACE science fantasy fiction thing, it's too bad the real name of the book isn't "Prince of Stars" because, hey, how neat would that have been?

#4 - Recall back to chapter 4 when the reception room Aoi is in goes kablooeey. All references to SP there seem to indicate law enforcement types. So why then, here, is the security detail apparently NOT the SP and more to the point, why is the security detail helping the SP escape WITH the President instead of the SP helping the President escape himself?

#5 - Don't know enough about describing firearms in English to know what the appropriate adjective is for the sound of a silencer... DULL maybe? Muted? Since I don't know, I'll stick with the original Japanese.

#6 - Is there a real English saying that embodies the spirit of this?

#7 - Sumizawa described the swarm of houses as being "paratent" and this seems to be just a regular old tent you might see at an outdoor event. I find it odd, then, that there are air ducts and what not for Nanashi to hide in, but whatever. Perhaps all houses are not tents (although we're only told about the tents)

#8 - The name of mars' moon is a transliteration, Nanashi tells us Phobos means "confusion, dismay, consternation, panic" according to Greek mythology. That is what the raw text says. So I google stuff. Phobos IS the name of a moon of Mars, the word Nanashi uses to explain what Phobos means IS "confusion" BUT the English definition of the Greek God Phobos is FEAR/HORROR. The Japanese definition of Phobos is TAKE FLIGHT... what? The name of the GOD, however, is still "fear." I think my head just blew up a little. OH, btw, this is where English gets "-phobia" from!

#9 - there is a personal pronoun here (the same one used to refer to Heero most of the time in MC-0022 acutally) but I believe it's just supposed to be referring to Phobos the moon.

#10 - depending on how one choses to interpret 初老 which I've gotten anywhere from "middle aged" to "past middle

aged" in dictionaries and had various reports of various ages ranging from "forties" up to "sixties."

#11 - I'm not sure if Nanashi is saying he doesn't know how anyone could see them as looking "gentle" or if he's saying he doesn't know how anyone could have been in the same place as he was.

#12 - They both use "yoroshiku" which is Japanese for about a million different situations and a million different things so rather than put the rather bland salutation "nice to meet you" (since apparently, she already knows him) I decided to use the Arabic [according to the intarwebz] greeting Salam for Katrine and the Russian for Nanashi (as the original Trowa is of Russian decent according to the gundam wiki).

#13 - Sumizawa uses "nakama" which DOES translate as friend, but I believe it's not as buddy-buddy as the word "tomodachi." People at work, for example, you might get along swimmingly well with them AT WORK, but have never thought to share a beer with them on your own time. I would consider that person a "nakama." "nakama" is also the word he used to describe Nanashi's relationship with his terrorist group.

#14 - Google doesn't return any hits that AREN'T for this anime when I search for "Endless Waltz" in English, all I get is anime hits. A Japanese search for the name just gives me a wiki page about the Rokumeikan (which was apparently a Japanese attempt at Westernizing back in The Day... there is an eponymous live house today where visual-kei bands play)

#15 - Er, if they were already in domes when the resource satellites hit, how did they miss what seems like a huge impact on a little planet? *shrugs* science *fantasy*

#16 - the sentence you've just read is written in English in the raw text and it is reiterated again in Japanese. Unlike #14, I have decided to forego the repetition because in THIS case, it's just plain old English that's being doubled up.

#16.5 - this is another snippet I take to mean that a significant amount of time has passed and the Gundam boys are pushing sixty. There's no reason Nanashi would lie to HIMSELF as he speculates about Catherine's age and if he high balled her at 40, then to be *significantly* younger than Doktor T, there should probably be no less than ten years difference and I (obviously) think it's more like 20 or so.

#17 - Literally, he says "Catherine Obasan" and Obasan is a title used for ladies who are old enough to be your mother (read: forties to sixties would be a fairly safe range). HOWEVER, we don't have anything like this that can be affixed to a name, so I decided to just use "ma'am" since that's got a nice, older-lady ring to it.

#18 - I'd like to give Catherine a knuckle sandwich myself. The MISS part is just a transliteration of "Miss" and that's choice number one. Choice number two is actually "big sister" but it's being used HERE as "Obasan" was used in #17: to address a female who is old enough to be your sister (for little kids, any little girl who you believe or actually is older than you on up to about mid-twenties or maybe your thirties) BUT again, since we don't HAVE such fine age-distinguishing terms of reference for third parties, I have decided to go with "Lady."

#19 - near as I can tell, this is probably a giant version of a standard dart board.

- Current Mood: 😊 accomplished

[Translation] Frozen Teardrop, Chapter 5, part 2



inchoate-oeuvre.livejournal.com/3717.html



MC-0022 First Winter

To a human, outer space was dangerous (like sitting back to back with death). (In other words), it was the same as doing a tightrope walk; as long as we were sailing through, it is utterly obvious that unexpected things would occur (in succession). It was necessary to be able to judge things calmly and to have a sense of balance. This was one of those times.

It happened seven days out from reaching Mars' orbit. Once every several years, the sun produces an X-10 class solar flare and aboard the small vessel 'Phobos', to avoid getting bombed, we had to take refuge in a bed which doubled as a radiation shield. Direct exposure to X-10 class radiation [invariably/instantly] lead to death for a human. As the long term forecast had predicted a solar flare to occur around this time, interplanetary travel was to be avoided. Additionally, [you] were supposed to travel in a large spacecraft equipped with radiation shield (capabilities).

"Thirty six hundred seconds until the solar flare." In about six minutes, severe solar radiation would hit-- that was (when it happened). We received a rescue signal.

"This is the interplanetary transport vessel Kubrick."

It was the transport ship that, like us, had left Earth and preceded us to Mars. This was an omen of the coming flare. The video was snow[ed out] so all we could get was the audio. The voice sounded like a female's. Their ship had, mid-flight, encountered a meteor shower (lit: meteorite stream) and the ship had sustained heavy damage.

"This vessel's radiation shields are out of order (and don't work). Emergency, please rescue [us]."

From a humanitarian perspective, you should save them, but in the provisions of space navigation laws, it wasn't a crime to ignore them. The possibility of both [parties] going under was [too] high.

"This is the interplanetary space vessel Phobos. How many people [are there] on board?"

"Four including myself....."

Even if we rescued those four people, our ship only had two capsules and just one reserve [capsule] on board. I/we couldn't just help just one person.

"Nearly all the crew was killed by a meteorite [hit]..... the only survivors are [regular] passengers, myself included [#20], and no one has experience working out ship."

I looked to Catherine. She made a quick decision, "You have to go over there."

"Roger..... I'm going to board [your vessel] and repair the shield apparatus. Send me the circuiting map." Instantly, the circuitry map was sent. I confirmed three places where there were breaks in the lines. Also, from the out ship camera feed, I identified twenty four meteorite fragments (lit: shards which contained a lot of iron) in the vicinity. I predicted those shards were one of the causes the radiation shields weren't operational. I would have to clear the fragments and replace the three broken circuits unit by unit.

"Do you have spare circuit units?"

"Actually, we already tried that and it didn't work. The job was too delicate to be done with the out ship ROV pod."

"So the spare units are out ship, then?"

"[We've left them] in the pod's manipulator [arms]."

If it was [such] delicate work, I'd have to take an astrosuit [so I could do it out ship myself].

"There aren't even five minutes left, is it really possible to fix it?"

"I can't guarantee anything but it's best to believe there's no alternative."

"It's too dangerous! I couldn't possibly let you do such a thing when I don't even know you!"

"Don't worry about it..... it might not seem like it, but [I happen to be] good at doing the tightrope walk."

There were three thousand seconds before the sun flare [came blazing in] with its radiation. We put on speed; it would take twenty seven hundred seconds to [synch speeds] with the Kubrick.

"[Once] the ships have matched speeds, I'll need ten second to get over there, one hundred eighty seconds for the repairs and ten seconds for getting back here."

"We can only make [the two ships] maintain relative standstill for three hundred seconds. You'll need at least thirty seconds to get over there."

"Even so, that leaves forty [whole] seconds to spare. If it's just me, my predicted time [allotments] will be plenty."

"You plan on doing this job alone?"

"Catherine, I need you to monitor this ship's speed."

"Nanashi..... you-- aren't afraid of dying?"

"If I do this like my life depends on it, nothing is impossible..... you told me that, Catherine."

"....."

"Anyway, regardless of mission completion or failure, I want you in the radiation capsule two hundred seconds before the flare."

"..... fine."

The twenty seven hundred seconds passed in the blink of an eye. Our ships reverse burners were already working to decrease our ship's speed. I exited the planet hopper Phobos in an astrosuit and climbed on top from the port side. Though space doesn't have "up" and "down." I could see Mars far off in the distance [before us]. I also visually confirmed that the large transport ship Kubrick was coming closer.

"Arriving at the rendezvous point. Sixty seconds until mission commencement," Catherine's nervous voice sounded over the wireless transmitter. "Three hundred thirty seconds until the radiation hits....."

"Don't worry. A job as simple as this is nothing compared to your special training....."

"Roger. If you complete this mission-- no, when you complete this mission, I'll give you a reward." It would probably be an orange or canned pineapple.

"Start the count down."

The transport ship Kubrick was above [me]. When I looked up, I could see deep inside the ship from the deep gouges [and the meteorites that made them] and, on the side, there was a spherical work pod. They appeared to be very close, but sat at a distance of roughly five hundred meters [from me].

"Five... four... three..." I held the ignition to a small propulsion pack (burner) I wore on my back, "two... one... zero!" [Our ships'] relative speeds synched and we reached [relatively static motion]. "Alright, here I go." I took off lightly. It was far easier than a trapeze. I went spinning to the Kurick. I did it in the allotted ten seconds. Just as Catherine had taught me, I faced the audience ((the out ship camera)) and bowed. Not that there was any applause.

"This is Nanashi, I've made it to the Kubrick."

"Roger..... two hundred eighty seconds until the flare....."

I confirmed the location for the twenty four fragments. They were all sizes, but even the small ones were about one meter [in length?]. They made perfect targets. "The knife throwing (training) will come in handy....."

"Two hundred fifty seconds left!"

I looked around at the fragments then took my position in the midst of them and I took twenty four darts which I had equipped with drill tips into my hand. (Then, relying on the principles) of knife throwing, I sent [the darts] flying. The darts each had a wire attached and were especially made for wire control (use) in space. Each little drill hit its target. And those bit deeply, getting a first fix [on the meteorites]. I pulled up on the wire as [I'd learned how] an animal tamer wields his whip and removed the twenty four fragments from the ship's body. Upon pushing the switch in my hand, the rockets at the (shaft tail) of the rockets (opened) and the meteorites flew off into open space.

"Bravo!" Catherine (transmitted) with a tinge of excitement. "That was beautiful, Nanashi! That was an excellent stage debut, no?"

I looked at the time stamp display in my helmet, "Catherine, we're under the two hundred second mark. Go to the refuge capsule already."

"No! When you get back, who will open the hatch?"

"I'll do it by hand from outside."

"It'll take time to do it manually..... if there isn't at least more than thirty seconds of leeway."

"If there's less than thirty seconds left, I'll take refuge on this ship."

"But....."

"All that's left is changing the circuit units..... Catherine, please, I want you to do as I say." Even as I made the entry, I hurried to the out ship pod.

"Fine..... since when have you been so impertinent?" She slammed the off switch on the transmitter. In the manipulation [arm] of the work pod there were three circuit unit boards. Taking those, I headed for the internal section where the broken circuits were. I could easily penetrate the innards for the cracks gouged into the ship's body. However, the internal construction was complex. I was down to one hundred fifty seconds. Finally, I arrived at my designated section. It took ninety whole seconds to find the broken unit among all the (similar) units and replace it with the spare unit board. I'd used a lot of my lost-time leeway.

"Kubrick, I changed the circuits..... please check."

"Understood..... I'll check now."

I had to wait.

Ten, twenty, thirty seconds were wasted. This went against my estimates.

"Confirmed..... al green, shield system operational." I was [finally] released from my lengthy nervous [wait (lit: condition)]. "Thank you..... from the bottom of my heart, thank you (for your courageous actions)." My helmet display showed that there were [just] thirty seconds to the flare.

"Kubrick, I don't have time to return to my own ship. I'm afraid I have to ask to take refuge on your ship." I waited for a response. I waited five seconds. A reply did not come. when their last transmission comes, it will probably be to add "[we] won't waste [your] sacrifice" or "may you rest in peace." They kept on ignoring [me] and seemed to intend to leave me in a lurch. Even this situation was not a crime according to space navigation legal regulations. There was no reason to believe it wasn't possible for us both to go under [i.e. die]. That was the first time in a long time I'd felt like that. Betrayal was the prerogative of mercenaries like me. I thought about destroying the Kubrick's shield system and taking them to hell with me, out of spite. But me? I was raised like a dirty old rag: to be used and disposed of. I thought I was meant to die alone. This state of affairs had been brought about by my lack of imagination and so it was my personal responsibility to just accept the outcome. I had no regrets. My tears were as frozen as ever. I crept out of the ship with twenty seconds left on the time limit. Far above my head, our ship, the Phobos, was slightly out of synch [speed wise] and I confirmed that it was slowly leaving. Bizarrely, I worried whether Catherine had [really] gone to the (shelter) capsule. If I died like this, all her special training will have been for naught. That in itself was [something for which] no apology could amend and no apology could excuse. In the end, I thought I'd look at Mars one last time. As expected, I couldn't see Phobos, but I wasn't upset.

"Looks like there wasn't a troisieme chemin after all. Doktor T's and Katrine's faces cut across my mind. It almost seemed as though I could hear the tones of "Scheherazade" from somewhere. It was calm, peaceful (auditory) hallucination. There was just ten seconds left. In infinite/limitless space, time [marched] pitilessly on. As for me, I understood that I didn't deserve to take up space [anymore]. So I had no need for a past. No need for a name.

I turned around and looked at the sun shining [in the distance]. I planned on dealing with the flare radiation that was my "fate."

"!?"

I couldn't see the sun. [Right] there before my eyes was the work pod and the spare refuge capsule that had been shot from and controlled by wires by the Phobos. Five seconds left. Inside the wide-open capsule hatch was a note written by Catherine:

IDIOT! Hurry up and get inside!!

Three seconds. I got in and hurriedly closed the hatch. Zero. The time display in my helmet was already in minus time. Since I was still in the astrosuit, it was really very cramped inside the capsule. But I wasn't in a position to complain. Catherine had used the wire controls well to move the work pod and [use it to] bring the capsule to me. It was a surprising technique. I couldn't hold a candle to [her performance]. Also, [all] the number of simulations [she had predicted] far and away outnumbered mine, no doubt about that. I was keenly aware of how much I didn't measure up.

The X-class radiation (poured) nonstop for two days. There was no worry about respiration for the duration. Although the astrosuit only had a day's worth of air remaining, by the fruits of Catherine's training, I'd become able to withstand even half oxygen density. I didn't have the faintest idea how I could ever express my gratitude to her. No a moment after two days had passes and the refuge capsule's hatch was opened. That [happened] aboard the Phobos. There's no doubting it was Catherine who had collected the whole shoot-n-match [pod and capsule]. I

collapsed against her.

"Nanashi!" Catherine took off my helmet and let me breathe fresh air.

"S...orr...y... th... an... ks." I was [only] half conscious. Then, all of a sudden, Catherine's fist was beating my face. It was more surprising than painful.

"Why you....." I was still dead on my feet when she grabbed me by the collar and brought her beautiful face close. "The next time you think about dying, DON'T! Because life isn't cheap!!" Somehow, the scent of her sweat made (my sense of smell) intoxicated. "Dirty old rag! Disposable! Please, don't make me laugh! You can give yourself a little more credit." There were tears in Catherine's clear eyes. I was astonished that there was anyone who would shed a tear over me.

"O- okay....." I had the feeling i'd gotten that 'place to go home to' that Doktor had talked about (from this [exchange with Catherine]).

"And another thing!" Said she as she smoothed my fringe upwards. "Your reward!" Catherine gave me a kiss on my forehead. It was the best reward I'd had yet.

The Kubrick sailed far behind us. There was a transmission apologizing [for their err]. This time, the picture was crystal clear. There was an elegant, middle-aged woman [on screen.]

"I am terribly sorry..... as soon as we [turned on] the radiation shields, we lost all ability to communicate."

[Ignoring me] hadn't been intentional. Catherine and I chose to accept their apology. I probably learned to put a little faith in the human race.

When the Phobos reached Mars' orbit, we were contacted by Katrine.

"It's been a long time, Mr. Nanashi." She was smiling as usual. "I'll meet you at an unused station, so please wait for me." However, her old [tom] boyish airs had now, [from] behind those glasses, become downcast and fearful eyes of a young girl.

"What's the status of the 'Prometheus' and 'Scheherazade'?"

"It's slow going..... recently, I've been more interested in my brother's completion of 'Snow White.'" There was a low tone in each word she said. Something was amiss with her.

"Katrine, is something bothering you?"

"Bothering? No, nothing's wrong." She acted cheerful but I could (see) there was a dark shadow in her heart.

"But if it really looks like there is, I kind of fell in love, hahaha....."

Love? That was a sensation I didn't understand well. However, I understood perfectly how she forcibly inhibited her emotions. I had an indescribably bad feeling about it.

MC-0022 NEXT WINTER

It was about three months later that Katrine and I parted ways. As for her dark mood, I'd never seen it after that [transmission after training]. Speaking [more] precisely, I didn't really have the opportunity to see her. Prometheus and Scheherazade, like myself, were still incomplete. On the other hand, Professor W's Snow White and Warlock seemed to have been finished. They seemed to be very top-secret machines and I didn't know where they were

being kept nor could I see them. Thus, my training had been done with MS Mars suits. Doktor T had always been my opponent in [our] mock battles and Katrine had never been in an MS. (Similarly), Katrine might have been such a good (lit: perfect) pilot that she didn't need training, for she not once entered the simulated cockpit nor took part in [our] mock battles. In the corner of the hall, I saw Katrine's violin case, where it had been left to collect dust. For a girl who hated the Mars dust as much as [she] did, it sure was unusual [for her] to have left her beloved violin like that.

"....." I supposed I wouldn't hear her play "Scheherazade" again. It felt a little sad. With my knit cap, I dusted off the case. I didn't particularly mind [the dust in my hat], it was just a dirty old rag [of a cap] after all. When I'd taken off my hat, I noticed my fringe had somehow gotten rather long. It didn't make any difference [to me].

Doktor T, Professor Q, and Catherine were having a discussion somewhere I didn't know.

"Doktor, what's Nanashi's status?"

"Not bad..... he's probably a little better than I was at his age, maybe."

"Really..... that's good."

"Did something happen? You're not your usual self."

"....."

"Is it Katrine?"

"Yes..... just recently, she's been acting oddly."

"She probably just wants to [fly] Snow White. She just wants the new toy."

"I wish it were [so simple] but....."

"No, it's better to assume Katrine has never been in Snow White."

"Why?"

"Father [Maxwell] contacted us..... it seems that Operation Mythos has begun."

"Well, what of Sleeping Beauty?"

"Yes..... he's finally on the move."

"Personally, I don't like that kid."

"Lieutenant Commander Kathy is heading to the North Pole base [now]..... she's going on a delivery mission with Snow White and Warlock in tow (lit: on board the Voyage)."

The story [of how] Katinre had stolen the incomplete Prometheus from the subterranean hangar and headed to Relena City came out [well past] midnight.

"Did she betray us?"

I didn't believe it at first.

"There's hardly any doubt....." [He] had a grave expression (on his face). "Nanashi, would you go after her?"

I replied immediately without hesitation, "..... understood."

Catherine cut in, "No! He's only been trained on the Mars suit, right?"

"It's okay Catherine..... thanks to your special training, I've learned how to respond in any situation."

"But you still don't have a name! Do you really understand the importance of life?!"

"[If you're worried] about a name, [I've] already decided....." As ever, there was no no point in looking for value in the past (lit: no value in finding value in the past), but I believed I had graduated from being a disposable dirty old rag.

"Doktor..... is your 'T' really for Triton?"

"Yes....."

I passed my dirty old rag of a knit cap to Catherine, "Then my name is Trowa....." I assumed the name of the third choice, the third path. My long fringe covered half my face. "You can call me Trowa Phobos."

Going by the name 'Confusion,' that had been an admonition to my former self.

"Very well..... Trowa Phobos," said Doktor T, looking straight at me as he had done when we first met. "Will you fight for us? [ALT: Fight for us.]

"Understood....."

Aboard the long-distance hovercraft The Grape [#21], Katrine [went from] the Chryse Sea to the western continent and sped towards the far away Mt. Olympus. Olympus was the highest peak in the solar system. It's pinnacle was 2700 meters. On Mars, where magnetic inconsistencies occurred easily, it was [impossible to] get your bearings with a compass or navigation device. If Mt. Olympus served as your landmark, then you could maintain your bearings even in a sand storm. I (also) followed after Katrine in a similar hovercraft, the Odehaman [#22]. And the distance [between us] was closing. There, there was a vast desert of crimson. The morning sun dyed the sky a bright red. As I faced the sun, the eponymous moon jumped out. In the middle of the desert, Katrine stopped The Grape. Had she given up on running away? I immediately disregarded that thought. From [her ship] Katrine contacted me. Just like the first time I'd met her, she was wearing goggles.

"Hey, did you see Phobos, Mr. Nanashi?"

"You've got the wrong guy..... I'm not Nanashi. Actually, it's just that I shouldn't be Nanashi anymore. "I am Trowa Phobos....."

"Trowa?!" Katrine blurted with a guffaw. How rude. "Have you given Phobos a name on top of that?" She held her stomach as she continued to laugh.

"....."

"You are a unique one, aren't you," [she said] brightly, like you would never think she would steal a mobile suit, made a get away, and betray you. "So? Did you give up [wearing] that hat, too? It looked really good but....." Yet behind her goggles, her eyes blazed with bloodlust. "I liked that hat [a lot] you know." As soon as she said that, dozens of giant figures rose up from the sand in the desert surrounding me. "A lot..... a whole lot."

Mars suits, huh. No, these were mobile suits.

"Those aren't Mars suits or mobile suits." I'd been completely surrounded. "They're mobile dolls."

Mobile dolls?"

"But personally, I've been calling them 'Maganac.'" After a [quick] check, I learned that there were forty Maganacs. "You'll turn a blind eye to me, yes?"

"I can't agree to that....."

"I understand....." All the Maganacs moved as one. That's when it happened. Two new machines appeared on the (enemy detection) radar.

"Two suits?!" It seemed that Katrine noticed the newly appeared blips (lit: machine shadows). "It can't be?!"

Suddenly, the desert was hit by a ferocious wind storm accompanied by magnetism. All the monitors shut off. The enemy detector radar also wasn't responding. I immediately left the hovercraft's cockpit and stood upon the body. Katrine had likewise gone out. There weren't supposed to be any machines that could move in a storm like that. The Maganacs, of course, had stopped. However, I visually confirmed the miracle of those two [machines] wriggling far off in the distance. They were two mobile suits wrapped in hooded cloaks. Not Mars suits. The two eyes glowing beneath the hood attested to that [fact]. Of course (I knew) they weren't mobile dolls. Through the raging wind, those two machines were surly coming closer. Katrine looked at those figures and screamed loudly,

"Snow Whiiiiiiite!!!" The machine in the white cloak drew its beam saber.

"Warloooooock!!!" The machine in the black cloak leveled its beam scythe.

It was a puzzle how those two machines could move through the sandstorm. "It was for you that I....." Katrine took off the goggles and continued to scream, "..... have long been waitiiiiiiing!!!"

We heard a voice from the black cloaked machine, "You're the Winner girl, aren't you?"

We heard a voice from the white cloaked machine, "I'll check....."

The sandstorm got even more violent.

"Termagant [#23], are you really planning to go to Relena Peacecraft?!"

"I am! I'll turn all of Mars into the Cinq Kingdom!"

"In that case, Katrine," the white machine (invaded), its cloak fluttering, "I will kill you....." quietly pronounced the boy with the cold eyes [as] he sat in the cockpit of the machine called Snow White [#24].

To Be Continued

NOTES

#20 - Literally, it says "by an accident with a meteorite, almost crew members died.... I who survived and the others are all just passengers...." I run into usage mistakes with "almost all" and "nearly all" at work every damn day so I know that, in Japanese at least, using the word "almost" can IMPLY the "all" part whereas in English, it does not. That's not the problem... the problem is, WHY does it say "almost [all]" the crew were killed if the only FOUR survivors are [regular] passengers?

#21 - A google search of the Japanese word yielded no more than FOUR returns, three from the same blog about Frozen Teardrop itself and remaining one about a color of OPI nail polish..... !! The ship's name is ザグレーブ in Japanese.

#22 - Another fruitless search for the name of Trowa's ship. The ship's name is オデハーマン in Japanese.

#23 - This the all purpose derogative personal pronoun, but since I've been told it's "un-Gundam like" to have swears in the text, this is the closest I could get in English. It's pretty damn close.

#24 - I think it's retarded Trowa Phobos is commenting on the coolness of Heero Yuy's eyes when Trowa Phobos has presumably never SEEN Heero let alone met him, but *shrugs*

- Current Mood: 😊 accomplished

[translation] Frozen Teardrop, Chapter 6



inchoate-oeuvre.livejournal.com/4167.html



NOTE: un-flocking this made it "too long" to be posted. The footnotes have been removed and put in a separate post [here](#)

NOTE: I am aware I have written "Katrine Wood Winner" and it's come to my attention and been pointed out by a few readers that it's "Oud" and I think the general consensus is: I was wrong. I am sorry, but I'm going to put off fixing all this until a later time...there is a lot of text to go through (but it would be a fantastic refresher, when I get around to it).

MC File 2

Once upon a time there lived a rooster called "Voice of Dawn." One day, as Voice of Dawn was walking, a fox came along and jumped upon the high wall. Then, the fox spoke:

"Why do you run away?"

Voice of Dawn decided to ignore [the fox] and did not answer (at all).

"The other day, the Lion, king of beasts, and the Eagle, king of birds, had a discussion. And they have decided that all animals shall stop killing other animals."

Voice of Dawn spoke as he looked far off into the distance, "There is a hound running up from over there!" When the fox heard that, he panicked and fled. "Why do you run away? Haven't all the animals stopped killing each other?" But the fox did not return.....

The Dawn of World Peace

From A Thousand and One Nights told by Scheherazade

MC-0022 Next Winter

Katrine Wood Winner. That's my name. My father's name was Zayed Tabla [#1] Winner. He's been dead for decades. My middle name is a [kind of] instrument, as are [the middle names of] my older brother, 'Raberba [#2],' and my father, 'Tabla,' and that's one thing customary to the Winner family. Iria told me that (later). I know Quatre killed our Father and Mother. Mother, after who I am named, died giving birth to Quatre. It seems that for women at the time, 'pregnant' was synonymous with 'death' [#3]. I don't think that's any excuse, but since I had no mother, [they used] techniques from the last era [AC]; I was conceived by in vitro fertilization and born a test tube baby. Ever since I was born (to this world), it's been my fate to shoulder [the question?] of what it means to live.

There is not one life that isn't worth saving. The heaviest thing in [all of] space is life.

That's true, isn't it? For example, the Katrine for whom I am named traded her life so she could give birth to my elder brother Quatre but..... that was the right decision, right? I actually asked [my brother].

"Brother, have you ever been happy you were born?"

"That's a tough question..... I think I'll know the answer when I die."

"How many people have died because you were born?"

"I don't know..... Father and Mother definitely died because of me, I myself have killed many people in war....."

"But, you've saved the lives of many more people, right?"

"Yes..... the people who survived on the battlefield, they all rely on that thought to keep going."

"I've never seen you cry."

"I cried a lot a long time ago..... maybe my tears are frozen now."

"....."

"If you shed a tear and make an apology, then maybe someone will forgive you, but I cannot forgive myself..... so I decided I wasn't going to cry anymore."

Say there is a peaceful world but it's under control, and there is a free world but it's constantly at war, which place is [the] happ[ier place]? Naturally, a world that is free and [has] peace is ideal, but I don't think a place like that actually exists in this world. Both sides find some points upon which to compromise and [despite] a film of little inconveniences, they [must] manage to find satisfaction-- that is the condition of the world in which man lives, isn't it? If sacrificing a few can bring happiness to the many, that must certainly be the virtuous route. However, it's necessary for those who are to be sacrificed to assent. If a mutual agreement isn't reached, then force is used. Whereupon the 'supreme happiness' of the large majority transforms into the immoral 'arrogance' of the strong and absurd demands are made of the weak. [My] father Zayed was of a minority opinion. He was against the militarization of the space colonies. As he was a wealthy man, large numbers of colonial citizens [tried to] coax him into buying them weapons, but he stubbornly refused.

"Humans can just barely live in space. War and whatnot, it's an impossible, stupid act."

I think that's the right opinion. However, Quatre didn't abide by that thought.

"War is sad. But if someone doesn't fight, the war will not end."

He took the mobile suit called Sandrock and went himself to the battlefield.

No matter how perfect the saint, the majority will be full of sacrifice. The problems of space have been much talked about, but if [you're] really going to inquire about the importance of it [224/2/9], then the best method seems to be the decimation of mankind, that (ultimate theory) doesn't feel entirely wrong [to me]. For man, if to live means to sin, then it's better to stop living straight away, what's more, a way to 'atone for sins' must be developed and put into action. It's funny but actually, most people alive don't have [any concept (lit: consciousness)] of 'sin.' Living is natural; and death, [that] certainly ought to be hateful. But my case is a little different. The gift of life was a result of an intentionally performed medical technique; the meaning of [my] life has, from the very beginning, been laid out like something of a mission. The suffering of all the people in this world must be removed. For (the sake) of the happiness of many others, I must volunteer. That was the life given to me. It's okay to treat my life cheaply. Even in space, my life falls under the category of things to be taken lightly.

I decided to wear glasses. Not because my eyesight was bad, it just felt like someone like me didn't deserve to look directly at such a world inundated with beautiful life. Doesn't everything appear clam when looked at with a microscope or telescope? It was something like that. When I looked at the world without [that filter], it was embarrassing and left me rather unsettled.

The scenery that spread before my eyes now was probably Mars' most beautiful. The morning glow of the sun starting to rise. [And] to that the unique solar eclipse [caused by] the first moon Phobos sinking in front. Mt. Olympus towered jet-black off in the distance; a sandstorm raged in the vast red desert stretching out at the foot [of Olympus]. And [there were] two giant humanoid weapons-- mobile suits.

White cloaked Snow White.

Black cloaked Warlock.

I was excited. The two suits, black and white, were paragons of beauty. With my spirits lifted, I called their names. However, the person I admired coldly declared:

"Katrine..... I will kill you."

He had somewhat of a different image from the 'Heero Yuy' of whom Relena had spoken.

"Heero is the man who gave us hope," she had said with eyes downcast in shame/embarrassment [#4]. "I also beseeched President Dorothy. For the sake of bringing peace to Mars now, we need him." [#5]

That is most definitely what I had heard--

Trowa Phobos came calling at my back.

"Think about it, Katrine! The ideals of Relena Peacecraft can't be realized [right] now!!"

I knew that much at least. I knew I might be fighting a losing battle. But if someone doesn't fight for those ideals, nothing will change these sad, miserable conditions. I had decided. I would [fight to] achieve Relena's total pacifism.

MC-0015 - 0019

When I was little, I was raised by Doctor Iria. Iria was the one who best understood my feelings. She seemed like a kindly mother. It was probably her that brought me into the world. She is also my big sister and was born a test tube baby herself (I had her tell me). My birthday is the same day (lit: anniversary) of the Mars Independence day. Ever since then, I hear disputes have broken out here and there. But little me was indifferent. Far removed from the (Mars district city), out in the sticks, there was a para-terraforming life dome and there, Iria had opened a small hospital called Winner Hospital [#6]. It was a small, wooden house that looked just like a bird house, yet it housed the latest medical equipment; I remember it running smoothly. Outside the house, a transparent dome isolated us from the rest of Mars and [inside] it was full of beautiful trees, a sparkling lake, and birds and squirrels and other little critters flitting between the trees and running around. Each season in the garden, pretty flowers bloomed and beautiful butterflies flew around elegantly. I am sure fairies and dwarves must have lived there. To me, as a kid, that idyllic place was my whole world. And I truly thought I'd never venture out into the outside world. I selfishly dreamed that gentle Iria and I would stay together always. I was pretty much a tomboy and pretty spoiled [alt: hanging on Iria's apron strings #7]. After dinner (just the two of us), Iria often played the violin for me. It was an old violin and she played a beautiful song from long ago. I thought she had a bothersome musical middle name, too, but she said that she didn't.

"Only the Winner family heirs have middle names," that's what Iria said. "[I] want you to succeed Quatre." That was the first time I'd heard the name of my older brother, Quatre.

"Mr. Quatre, he doesn't have kids?"

"No..... he won't marry nor will he love."

".....?" I was amazed. I was little so I didn't understand what she was saying.

"He's a bit odd..... Quatre used to play this [very] violin a long time ago."

"You won't get married, Iria?"

"I'm an old lady." She didn't look [that old] in my eyes. "Moreover, I've got my work as a doctor..... If I said things like

this to [my husband], he'd surely get angry." Iria continued her research on Martian endemic diseases. At first, I thought I'd been born to be a guinea pig for [researching] those illnesses.

"Katrine, please, please don't say such sad things," said Iria as she hugged me tight and shed tears. At the time, I honestly didn't care one way or the other but she lavished love upon me unconditionally. There was just one time, when Iria was making a house-call, that I tried to play the violin.

SCREECH.....

That was the only [horrible] sound I could make; I knew I really couldn't play the violin. But I managed okay on the piano. I tried playing the song Iria had performed from memory.

"That's great, Katrine! I thought you were a genius....." I think I was about two at the time. But that's in Mars years, I just thought I'd mention that. Iria slept in the same bed with me [#8]. When I couldn't sleep, Iria would tell me nursery rhymes from a long time ago. Great adventures upon ships, secret caves, flying carpets, genies coming out of lamps; I always listened eagerly. I didn't know it until later, but those were the stories told by Scheherazade in One Thousand and One Nights. It might have been because of that that I took a liking to reading books. Iria had a veritable mountain of books in her personal collection, if there was anything in there that I didn't understand, there was a handy thing called a computer [which had] a store of information. My interest grew without bounds and I read all kinds of things about all kinds of [subjects]. People often say [it was] 'special education for gifted children' but at least in my case, it was a hobby I did because I liked it, so I didn't like the term 'education' being used. Also, there was a game called 'Image Trace' and when you synched it to your brain waves, you could temporarily reenact data from a specific person. I played with it often. Around then, [when I played] I got [so] into the role of the male hero that somewhere along the line, I started referring to myself in the masculine. I reformed the software to suit my needs 226/2/4. For example, I'd download Iria's violin performance program and although I wasn't super confident, I could reenact [the performance] so that even I could play "Scheherazade." But there was a limit to the digital conversion and it had taken several months of continued practice to learn how to play it properly. When I performed (lit: demonstrated) it in front of Iria, she was choked up when she spoke, "You're like Quatre with that kind of skill..... but you can't go easy on your practice because (for people) there is value in that which you have toiled over....." That was the only time Iria [gave me] anything like candid advice. Even when I started referring to myself in the masculine despite being a girl [#9], she accepted it with a smile on her face.

Two or three times every six months, Rashid, a big man with a magnificent white beard, came to our house to deliver provisions, medicine, and the latest medical equipment.

"I really appreciate you always doing this," Iria politely thanked [him].

"Don't mention it 226/3/9, Miss Iria."

I loved Uncle Rashid.

"That's because we're Maganacs!" His smiling face was fantastic. "You (lit: Little Miss) look more and more like master Quatre and it seems like you're [already so] intelligent! Keep it up! I'm looking forward to [seeing you grow up]!" Uncle Rashid's job was [doing the] Winner family interplanetary shipping and whenever he passed close to Mars' orbit, he never failed to stop by. Somewhere along the line, just when Uncle Rashid came, I noticed that typically bare-faced Iria wore make-up. I began to think that Iria was in love with Rashid, though it is only something I've heard about from books. There was just one time when I asked Uncle Rashid as he was working in the garden.

"What do you think of Iria?"

"I think she is a great person."

"Won't you marry her or something?"

"You kiddler! Iria and I are from different worlds (lit: social classes)." Uncle Rashid got red in the face and turned around. I asked a simple question:

"Because she's a test tube baby?"

"....." Uncle Rashid stopped his garden work, came up to me taking big strides and glared at me with his big eyes.

"Miss Katrine! Please don't say that again!" He had a powerfully serious face. "First of all, I'm a test tube baby myself!" I thought if that were so, then it had no connection to their social standing.

"Iria likes [you], Uncle Rashid....."

"I already have Kami. My forever complaining, none-too-easy-on-the-eyes, rough wife-"

Wouldn't Iria be a far more appealing woman than such a wife [as that]?

"-but she's my kind of woman [ALT: she matches me]."

White magnolias were blooming in the garden and a wonderful smell wafted through the air. "Men and women don't always do what we want them to do."

"I guess it's hard....."

"But Miss Katrine, please fall in love how you think you should, how you feel you should. You must not be untrue to your own heart! Being born from a test tube (and all), that's absolutely irrelevant!"

"O-okay....." I nodded in front of Uncle Rashid but I couldn't even imagine myself in love. Magnolias mean "love of nature." 227/2/22 I didn't understand love towards people but all the nature here in space, that I respected and loved its will to live 227/2/25. All of nature makes my life shine with my own thoughts/wishes.

"You resemble Master Quatre in the strangest ways....." Uncle Rashid was muttering something but I couldn't really catch it.

Two patients were admitted to Winner Hospital. One of them was a nice old lady named Marine [#10] Darlian and she affectionately always called me Relena. Every time she did that, I told her my name was Katrine, but Ms. Darlian didn't seem to listen.

"I was, a long time ago, a lady-in-waiting for [Mistress] Katerina..... that's your real mother, Relena."

"But I'm not Katerina, my name is Katrine..... and I'm also not Relena."

Ms. Darlian kept telling me to behave more like a lady.

"Ms. Darlian, do you want milk in your tea?"

"Yes, please. But Relena, good girls say 'Would you like some milk?'"

It seemed like this Relena was the daughter Ms. Darlian had raised. "Put on a skirt. It would certainly look good on you, Relena." I listened to what she told me. I loved seeing her smiling face. Tomboy that I was, I had to be on my best behaviour when I was with Ms. Darlian. And I took to calling myself watakushi [#11] instead of boku.

The other [patient] was a year older than me; her name was Stella. She was always asleep in bed. Stella, who had a chronic congenital disease in her heart and lungs, only smiled when I was with her, so I decided to be at her side as much as possible. Twice, I had seen Stella as she was in [the throes of great] pain. She cried out in misery, "It hurts..... it hurts....." She cried, screamed, coughed, threw up blood; she was in agony. "Please don't look at me...

go away....."

Iria gave Stella some painkillers and that managed to settle her, but it seemed as though Stella hated that I had seen her [in such intense pain]. An invisible wall went up between us. From the next day, I wasn't privy to seeing her with a smile on her face. It was sad. But (it seemed like) there was nothing I could do about it. It wasn't like Stella wanted to be sick. We were equally blessed with life but [as] she lived a life [bedridden] and full of pain and I had lived the life of a (spoiled) tomboy, [our worlds] were just too different. That's what I thought. Why couldn't someone like me who hadn't the least handicap give freedom to Stella-- that was no wonder 228/2/3. Stella began to suffer from insomnia. She was afraid [to sleep] because when she closed her eyes, she concentrated on every little pain. Just like Iria had done for me when I was little, I [sat] by her side and read books aloud to her. Seems I got lucky and [was able] to get Stella's smile back a little and she was able to get some peaceful sleep. By keeping that up every night, my friendship with Stella mended.

"Thank you....." Stella thanked me politely in her gravelly voice. "Katrine, will you be my best friend?"

"Little old me?"

"Of course....."

Stella and I looked at each other. At some point, tears welled up in our eyes and the [tear]drops gently fell. We were so happy. And then we talked about all kinds of things. The flowers blooming in the garden, the fish jumping in the lake, family stuff.

"I heard that I have twenty nine sisters and one big brother..... but I haven't met any of them except for Iria."

"I have a father and a mother and I have a Big-Sister-of-the-Same-Name..... but I haven't met them either."

A big sister by the name name? I didn't know what that meant but I was happy knowing that Stella wasn't alone. But I wondered why she'd never met them. We thought stella was on the slow road to recover, perhaps because the drugs for her illness were taking effect. Despite that, six months later, Stella was agonized by intense pain. Not even painkillers had any effect anymore. Iria made me leave the sick room. There was nothing I could do. Iria commenced an emergency operation and didn't come home until morning. I read aloud all through the night. It was just me in the bedroom but I read as hard as I could while the tears streamed down my face. I couldn't help but be frustrated at my inability to do something. Even though my best friend Stella was in so much pain, all I could do was sit in my bed and read aloud. The next morning, though not as if my wished had been granted, it looked as though Iria's operation had been a success. Iria had done what's called 'regenerative treatment' whereby a new heart and lungs had been produced from Stella's cells and transplanted [into her]. However, in Stella's case, because of the congenital disease, it was only a matter of time before she'd get sick again.

"That's why I want you to stay with her, Katrine....."

"Okay."

Stella got better day by day. I was really happy. She [even] recovered enough to go to the same junior school as me. [It was] MC-0019, Stella was five and I was four. Outside the dome, the dust clouds were horrendous. [Sand] got in my eyes and I couldn't stop tearing up. I was probably [just] afraid of the outside world 229/1/14. Just then, Uncle Rashid came along; he have me a pair of goggles.

"These are the goggles of the Maganac leader." When I put on the goggles, it felt like courage bubbled up inside me.

MC-0022 Next Winter

The advancing Snow White brandished its beam saber (overhead). And then in a flash of light, it stabbed the hovercraft I had been on. The cockpit was completely destroyed. I had, before that, jumped down to the red desert

and threw myself up a sand dune. I turned around and confirmed the destruction of the hovercraft. The hangar was unharmed.

"Good, looks like I'll still be able to collect Prometheus in one piece....." I muttered as I headed through the raging sandstorm for the lead Maganac suit. The goggles protected my vulnerable heart and eyes. I changed [the control schematics to] manual in the cockpit of the suit named 'Rashid.' From that machine, it was possible to control the [whole] Maganac Corps remotely. I [made ready to] pass the sandstorm.

"Sorry, but I'm going to have to resist!" I (threw) myself inside the cockpit of Rashid.

"The password is 'MAGANAC-8x5' Miss Katrine."

In the back of my mind, I heard Uncle Rashid's voice. I input that password on the sub-board. The main monitor switched on and 'Rashid' started up. The com-link somehow got restored. Amidst a dreadful noise, I could intermittently pick up on the conversation between the pilots of Snow White and Warlock.

"Did you get her?"

"No, she's probably going to start up the mobile dolls."

Bingo. That's just what I'd expect of the pilot I admired. Using the side controls, I [set up] a virtual keyboard. It was a mobile doll control apparatus styled like a piano keyboard. I pulled up the name of a composer who was a contemporary of the composer of the 'Scheherazade,' Rimsky-Korsakov.

"Do you like Sergei Prokofiev? 'Peter and the Wold' is good, and 'Romeo and Juliet' is also pretty, isn't it?" But my tastes [ran to] a piano sonata said to be difficult [to play]. It was also called the 'War Sonata.'

"Well, shall we use 'Piano Sonata No. 7'?" I commenced the performance (handling). With this song, I hailed the Maganac Corps and they started up.

"Oy, oy, the others moved!"

"You [go] slice through the left wing..... I'll attack from right to center."

"Ain't it gonna be hard taking on forty mobile dolls?"

"It's twenty dolls each..... your father could do it with his eyes closed."

"Ch! Big whoop. I'll show you!!"

Their conversation made me laugh. It seemed like they couldn't work as a team yet. In that case, there was hope for me.

"Seven dwarves for Snow White!" I continued my up-tempo performance, "A magic mirror for Warlock!" In my [video data], I had seen the (former [original]) "Gundam Deathscythe Hell" wield that giant [beam scythe] at Brussels on Earth. The beam scythe's destructive power exceeded [my] imagination. It was dangerous to approach the suit from all sides. I needed to send the mobile dolls in a (graduated) wave attack and [have them] firing at all times. Performance time for the war sonata was about eighteen minutes thirty seconds. Hanging on to the mobile dolls was the difference between [success and failure #12]. Seven of [my] best dolls surrounded Snow White. I programmed the remaining thirty two dolls with 'mirror trace' and they challenged Warlock to close-quarters fighting. I didn't think that would give me a win, but at least I [could buy myself some time]. That's how it was according to my calculations. Warlock didn't avoid the hundreds of bullets sniped at it. With a magnificent swing of the beam scythe, [he] destroyed all the ammo in one blow. The area was covered with a flash of light, an explosion, and a blast [of wind]. Warlock moved left and right even as [he] showed signs of going straight ahead. The black cape was whipping [through] the

wind and it was both ominous and elegant. [He] planned to make a conscientious attack from the left wing. However, the thirty two suits of the Maganac Corps anticipated [Warlock's moves] all the more and shifted right, putting themselves directly before their target, the Warlock.

"What are these things.....?!"

Duo Maxwell, the pilot of the Warlock, was taken aback by the unexpected moves of the mobile dolls. The mirror trace program was working excellently. Making mobile dolls take irregular attack patterns was a tactical theory. However excellent a pilot Duo Maxwell was, I predicted it would take quite a bit of time for him to read the pattern. The Snow White pilot, Heero Yuy, was calmly facing the seven cream-of-the-crop dolls (from my Corps).

"....."

Both sides glared at each other and neither so much as twitched 231/2/7. The seven Maganacs specially [modified] bodies [were equipped with] close-quarters beam canons, hand-to-hand combat beam sabers, mid-range support artillery with homing missiles, high speed chargers for diversions [#13], heavy defense equipment, and more-- all at the ready. I maintained a distance [that would allow me to] immediately yield free-for-all battle conditions should either one [Snow White or Warlock] make a move. A shower of sparks shot from the white cape where grains of sand blew against it. Those pale sparks made me feel the quiet [thrill] of war. In an instant, Snow White disappeared (from that place). I wondered if he would come attacking but he didn't. Heero Yuy's suit flew high up in the air and, turning several times as if to lead the seven mobile dolls, retreated (to the rear). The seven dolls made to follow vigorously, but I changed to a slow tempo [song] and instructed them to (act restrained). The purpose of this battle was not to win.

"Katrine, don't you want this suit?"

Heero Yuy opened a com-link and [his] provoking voice [filled my cockpit].

"Yes, of course," I said even as I maintained my distance. "But you aren't just going to let me take it me, are you?" The distance I kept was perfect for [making] preparations to attack another target. I had [yet] to eliminate the most dangerous player from the field. That boy referred to by the perfectly love name 'Nanashi' who had gone and chosen the ridiculous name of 'Trowa Phobos;' if I didn't beat him.....

MC-0020 Next Autumn

That junior school was called the Saint Minerva Institute and, as I had expected, it was a school building inside a para-terraforming dome. The very first people who moved to Mars had built it and it was quite old. There was a small Mars Federation Naval port nearby and there was just enough noise to make it a hospitable school [#14]. Stella and I were transferred to the same class. Everyone else was older than us but we followed the curriculum [without any problems]. Studying wasn't so much fun as it was a duty to complete, (so) talking to my classmates was far more interesting. Everyone adored me because they thought I was little and cute. Stella's vocabulary was pretty small 233/1/11, nevertheless, everyone warmed up to her and we made several good friends. I loved gym class. But I thought it was a shame that Stella always had to watch (instead of participate). One time, Stella suddenly collapsed in a corner of the gym. I panicked, called Iria, and had her come immediately (to the gym). It wasn't [just] Iria that arrived, but a large rescue vessel, and it took Stella from the naval port to a central hospital in a big city. All Iria and I could do was see her off.

"Two weeks ago, Stella and her big-sister-with-the-same-name were caught in [some military] dispute and now [the big sister] is brain dead."

"Brain dead?"

"Long ago, they used to call it a 'vegetative state' ." Iria closed her eyes for the pain. "In order to save Stella, they'll have her big-sister-with-the-same-name internal organs given to Stella."

"So, Stella will get all better."

"Yes..... probably..... it's ironic, though. She was actually the 'spare'....." said Iria in a small, pained voice. I had no idea what she meant. "Stella's suffered a lot..... so this is a good thing."

Several months later, Stella returned. She looked [healthy] and was bursting with energy.

"Katrine! I'm all better! The air smells wonderful [alt: it's great to be alive]. The doctor even said it was alright to go to gym class!" Her smiling face shone like I had never seen it shine before. "And my father and mother are so nice! I'm happy!!

Dreams do come true.

At the time, I was happy on the outside but..... Since then, Stella hadn't returned to the Winner Hospital, instead, she commuted to school from her own home. I got that Stella's family was very wealthy and a chauffeur picked her up and dropped her off at school, and they had dozens of employees living with them. Before I realized it, a great gap had come between Stella and me. I often tried talking to her but there some kind of formality [in the] atmosphere that made it difficult to approach her. It was thicker than the invisible wall from before, calling it a (sense of) alienation conveyed more exactly [what it felt like]. I suddenly noticed 232/3/15 that at lunch time, I often sat all by myself. One day, when I was walking through the halls, I heard several girls talking in one of the classrooms.

"I knew there was a reason her school record was so good."

"She skipped two years, didn't she?"

"Do you suppose she's a 'spare' after all?"

"No way, is it even okay for a 'spare' to go to school?"

"Her family is super rich so they can do whatever they want."

When I heard that, I thought they were talking about Stella.

"Hold it! When you put it that way....."

When I went into the classroom, I saw Stella standing in the middle of a ring of students talking with a smile on her face. The other girls avoided looking at me. Only Stella looked straight at me.

"How are you, Katrine?"

"Who were you talking about [just] now?"

"..... we were talking?"

Oh. They were talking about me. [For starters], I was the last daughter of the house of Winner and a test tube baby to boot. Since [that day], I was increasingly [and, ultimately, extremely] alienated from Stella and my classmates. I might have been Stella's [very] first real (lit: best) friend, but now I'd ended up somewhere around her thirtieth or fortieth. That wasn't a mistake [in and of itself]; as long as the sacrifice of a few [namely: me,] brought happiness to many. The whole thing would be over and done with if the minority [namely: me, again,] just accepted. Going to school became a bore. It was just a place to study. During lunch, I took to reading books in the library. I also tried reading books on history. Before Christ, Anno Domini, After Colony. I taught myself 233/1/9-1-< just how much the history of man consisted of a series of ups and downs. Gradually, I came to learn what the real word was. I felt dry 233/1/7. A 'spare' meant a 'clone' that the wealthy [ordered] at special medical institutions and were to serve as organ donors or 'spare parts' if the clone's owner ever became seriously ill. [It was] that [clone] which the men and women of the wealthy class called their "Little-brother (or sister)-with-the-same-name." However, in Stella's case, her

big-sister-with-the-same-name had ended up in a vegetative state so instead of the big sister, it was the little sister, Stella, who received the lung and heart transplant and overcame her standing as a 'spare.' Until then, she hadn't lived with her family but now she didn't have to worry about it 233/2/8. She was physically healthy and had truly gained her 'freedom.' Wasn't that something to be happy about? It was the one thing I wanted most. After all, I wasn't so different (in standing) from a 'spare.' I decided to grin and bear it. A few days later, [instances of] unconcealed harassment increased. Nobody would talk to me, they graffitied the computer inside my desk or broke it; they hid my gym uniform. But I took it all in stride.

"Always with a pretty smile, eh..... Miss Katrine is such a bright [as in happy], good child."

That was how the teachers saw me. Before I realized it, I had begun thinking it was very important to make them feel at ease (about me). The atmosphere in class wasn't bad and as long as I didn't complain or cause a commotion, it was peaceful at the Saint Minerva Institute.

I endeavored not to pray for things. Not because I wanted to negate the existence of God, but because, simply, it's just scary to think of my prayers being granted-- to the point that it scared me. In truth, I've had impressions that there is a 'heart' to space and couldn't it be putting it's will into action? Stella's case might have been a coincidence, but even if [it wasn't], I had the feeling I ought not to wish for my own happiness.

One day, in the afternoon, I was had been getting ready to go home as I always did. My goggles, however, had been lost. Once again, someone had hidden them [just] to be mean to me. If I asked Stella and her friends, they'd probably just say they didn't know and as I didn't have any friends [of my own] to help me look for them, I had decided to give it up for a lost cause and go home. Outside the dome, there were enough dust clouds to make my eyes water. The tears rolled down my face. Frankly speaking, at the time, somewhere in my heart, I hated every person at that school. I probably even thought I wanted them dead/gone [#15].

Out of nowhere, a resistance army raising a cry for 'Anti-federalism' began an attack on the Mars Federal army's naval base. It was a surprise attack by a storm hovercraft and five Mars suits. The negligent Mars Federal army was put down instantly. I'll bet no one [ever] thought a naval port out in the sticks would be attacked. Nevertheless, the Federal army mobilized nearby bases and attempted a desperate counterattack. The students couldn't leave the school and were instructed to take refuge at the shelter on the school's grounds. I made for the school dome, but it was already in emergency lockdown [mode]. I looked up in amazement at the huge humanoid weapons that were closing in. Federal support troops arrived in the area, one after the other. Live ammo from the Mars suits exploded against the school's dome. The dome was easily destroyed and then, the missiles started coming. I couldn't tell if they were from the resistance or the Federation. The old school went up in flames. I was horror-struck. I honestly regretted that another of my wishes had come true. Slightly removed from the school [grounds] was the underground shelter and it, too, was taking hits.

Then, I heard the screaming.

Surely several students and instructors have died, I had thought. War's greatest fault was (probably) that people with no connection to the war [whatsoever] were murdered without any regard for their individual beliefs. I was resigned to accept continuing my poor excuse of a life 234/1/1 < 2/1. I thought I had to help them. Even if I could only rescue a single precious life. I ran to the burning school grounds. Before my eyes, the school collapsed with a roaring thunder. Again, I felt acutely aware of my own powerlessness. I happened to look to my feet and there were my goggles. Although I'd hated the people at school for hiding them, I didn't want them to die. I regretted thinking even for a second that I had wanted them dead/gone. I picked up my goggles and ran to the battlefield. The resistance's five Mars suits were still firing and they were heading my way. Ahead of me, there was a Mars suit lying [on the ground]. I thought the machine had been hit and, being unable to move, had been abandoned. It might have some some weapons I could use. I wanted to help the people at the school somehow. That was my only thought as I opened the hatch to the cockpit. The simple security on the outer lock was [easily] broken. What surprised me was the pilot still inside. [He] was a young Federation soldier quailing in terror.

"No... I can't do it....." he was shaking. He had also wet himself. I felt sorry for him. When I looked at the internal display, I saw the energy gauge and accompanying weaponry was still battle-ready. "Can't..... I don't do it."

"Is it okay if I take your place?"

"Huh?"

I had never been in a Mars suit. But I couldn't think of any other way.

"Don't talk crazy, a girl like you....."

"Don't worry, I'll try." I got in the cockpit.

The young soldier spoke as he got out of the way, "Basically, this machine's programmed to respond somatically to me, it's not possible for someone else to operate it....."

I [used] the computer to clear all the pilot's recorded data, "There, now it'll be possible for me to operate [the suit]." Then I took a microchip from my pencil case and downloaded the image trance program. I selected 'Quatre Winner' from the several names listed. That [data] was very old left over combat data. I had copied from the Winner Hospital library. [Quatre Winner] could surely pilot a Mars suit without any trouble. That's what my intuition told me.

"We're going to move! Stand clear, please!" I put on my goggles and made the Mars suit stand up. Courage bubbled up [inside me]. "Let's go!" I turned to face the approaching resistance's Mars suits. The whole reason I was fighting in the first place was to get them away from the school. It seemed, however, that Quatre was skilled at hand-to-hand combat. I took uniquely suitable distance 235/2/6. My opponent seemed to be at a loss. That left a second's worth of an opening. I charged. Eluding the live bullets that were fired, I whipped out the beam saber and tore through the Mars suit holding a bazooka. I was afraid that the pilot had died. But as long as they were on the battlefield, they were supposed to be prepared to die.[.....] unlike everyone at the school.

"As if your life were more important than mine!" 236/1/3 I screamed as I turned to face the Mars suit coming up to attack me from behind and slashed it diagonally from one shoulder down under the other. "It's better not to fight!" Somewhere along the way, I'd picked up a second beam saber and held them at the ready and downed Mars suits that came at me from three directions. I was entranced. It hurt to breathe. I (cut off) the image trace program and pulled out the microchip. "....." When I took off the goggles, I knew tears streamed down my face. My chest, my heart, hurt. The disappearance of five souls was tough. I resigned myself [to the realization that] I could never go back to my regular life. I understood I could not return to school. After a while, Federation reinforcement troops came. Before [they got to me] I jumped down from the cockpit of the Mars suit, flitted over a pile of rubble and kept running away. According to the Federation, I was a perpetrator who had stolen and used a military-grade Mars suit. According to the resistance, I was a loathsome enemy who had killed five of their comrades. It was probably a contradiction. I felt that I had kept living for the people who had died [at my hands]. I kept running, several times along the way, I [had to] push my nearly breaking heart [to go on]. I wanted to see Iria. But after this, when I imagined how much trouble I'd caused, I couldn't contain myself. I was driven to want to go somewhere, anywhere, and [just] disappear. But, just one last time....

At home, a silver-haired, middle aged gentleman and a scholarly type man with long fringe were with Iria.

"Welcome home," Iria received me as she always had.

"Oh, so you're Katrine....." I immediately knew the bright, eloquent voice was that of my older brother Quatre. (I thought) I had come to live my life as I had thanks to this person's fighting style. And the five souls taken in the blink of an eye, that was his fault. "Yeah, you look like mother after all, don't you."

"To take out five Mars suits in your first battle, that's quite something." The scholarly type man spoke as he smirked,

"She's the perfect [addition] to our numbers....."

"Disparage me or praise me, it makes not difference to me. I just simply [used] the image trace."

"That's true. But I think it's better if you don't use that toy anymore..... play with it too many times and you'll lose your [nerve (lit: preparedness)] and liability."

"..... nerve and liability?....." I hated myself [for] making excuses. I want to help the people at school. I want to eliminate war. Wasn't that what I was really supposed to be thinking.

"Katrine..... are you living how you want to live?"

"What about you, brother?"

"Finding that answer may lead to death..... but I think you'll find it, if you live."

That was probably it. It wasn't the conclusion that was necessary just now 236/3/7. What was important wasn't the result, but the process.

"Are you going to take me in, brother?" It was okay to handle my life (shabbily).

"If you'll have us....."

In space, my life was just a drop in the ocean. For the sake of the greater good, I had to serve.

"Pleased to meet your acquaintance....." This was the life given to me.

"Nice to meet you. Well then, I am currently going by the name Professor W."

"I'm Doktor..... you may call me Doktor T."

"[Time to] leave the nest," said Iria as she handed me the violin. "You are the only Katrine Wood Winner in the whole world....."

And I took pride in the fact that I didn't have any pride.

"If you ever get homesick, come back home anytime," tears streamed down Iria's face as she offered me [those] kind words.

MC-0022 Next Winter

I continued my performance. Tapping the keys, I closed in on Trowa's hovercraft, got it in my sights and launched a big missile (at it). The (hovercraft) Odenhaman sank into the depths of the desert. But there was no response.

"He got away....." If I (judged) this calmly, there's no way Trowa Phobos would be so easily felled. My attack was within [his predicted] set of possible outcomes. But the chances were low that he would immediately launch a counter attack. The current problem was Snow White and Warlock. The number of Maganacs mobile dolls had really decreased. "It's not been ten minutes yet....." My performance had just entered the second movement. Yet half my numbers were out of commission. "I was too lenient in my assessment [of them]....." They were showing oppressive strength. In the space of just a second, when I saw a light flash by, [one of my] mobile dolls would already have been torn up. "Or perhaps not." I should say that I'd held them up for ten minutes.

"Heero Yuy" and "Duo Maxwell."

They are formidable [opponents (lit: existences)]. If those two [learned] teamwork, I suspect I would be absolutely helpless. I had checked the [video logs] of past battles and that exquisite combination had made me shudder. Attack

and defense, those two things were interchanged seamlessly between them, they [covered] each other; kept supply consumption to the bare minimum; even their (game winning hits) were double-double and they delivered four times over-- that was the fighting style of the old team. I'd gotten the impression that their being on the same wave length was a thing they had cultivated on the battlefield. That the "Duo" fighting before me was not the "Shinigami" displayed in [those] vid feeds was a very good thing for me. Thinking from a tactical perspective, when attacking a small force with a large one, annihilation by siege was the correct strategy. If the military strength was forty to two, that was supposed to be a cut and dry strategy, but I'd gone ahead and divided [my numbers] into two groups: thirty two to one and seven to one. Surely if I left Snow White and Warlock (alone) on the battle field, they would each come to learn the other's habits and directionals and in no time, they'd [turn into a formidable] team-- that much was self evident. That's why it was necessary for me to overassess their fighting power. So even though their numbers were small, I made two groups and made [Heero and Duo] beat them all 237/3. Even if I ignored the theory, I felt that this was the best strategy. My seven cream-of-the-crop dolls seemed too few against Heero Yuy. But when I estimated the destructive power of Duo's Warlock, the distribution seemed good. The mirror trace program read the opponent's movements in an instant and attacked by copying the same moves in reverse. Challenging Warlock to close-quarters combat, [he] could only go in for the kill if he was prepared to shoot himself, too 237/3/1-2. [This strategy] also had the [added benefit] of avoiding the mobile dolls greatest failure-- fighting amongst themselves. It also had the advantage of being able to cope with Duo's special, quirky attacks.

"Oi!"

Duo's screaming voice could be heard through the hard noise.

"Hey, oi! That's not part of the plan!"

Snow White jumped magnificently and while leaving an afterimage of beautiful particles that radiated pale light, continued to effortlessly dodge untold numbers of homing missiles.

"We were gonna split 'em twenty a piece!! I've already taken out twenty seven dolls!"

Heero Yuy calmly replied, "There are still twenty four dolls....."

"Ch! If you've got the time to count how many baddies have fallen, then get over here and help me!"

"Shut it..... I'm busy now."

I wasn't so confident as to give Heero Yuy [any] extra time. I had my seven best dolls continue their wave missile attack and keep up their 'in the round' [style of fighting]. And little by little, I closed the distance and had [the dolls?] move so as to block [my] movements [from being detected by the others, idk]. It was just like seven dwarves dancing madly around Snow White. But I had been careless. I had been unconsciously mesmerized by Heero Yuy's piloting techniques. Had I read the data more thoroughly, [I would have realized] Heero Yuy and Snow White wouldn't have made [any such] wasteful movements. I noticed much too late. When I finished the final chords of the battle sonata's second movement and made to plunge into the final movement--

'Rashid' suddenly stopped moving. My virtual keyboard disappeared.

"!"

The Maganacs stopped at the same time also. I wasn't supposed to finish for another three minutes thirty seconds. It was unfortunate, but I wasn't going to make it. And from the outside, the hatch was forcibly opened. Just like I had done once when I had piloted that Mars suit. The security was one hundred times stronger since then, but I couldn't expect anything less from a former terrorist. Standing before me was Phobos holding a pistol at the ready. To allow him to approach my suit and disable the security, Heero Yuy had made flamboyant moves with Snow White, showing a magnificent jump. Unbeknownst to me, they had made a superbly coordinated move.

With a straight face, Phobos joked, "Play time is over....." His gaze was as cold as ever. He hadn't changed a bit since I first met him.

"Don't applaud..... I have yet to play the third movement," I returned Phobos' glare albeit through my goggles.

MC-0022 First Spring

A year had passed since I'd gone to stay at Chryse circus when I'd welcomed a youth called 'Nanashi' as a friend [comrade/teammate]. 'Nanashi' had sad eyes that had a coldness to them that spoke of how he had given up on the world. He seemed to be like me. I played my [best piece] 'Scheherazade' for him. When Doktor T offered 'a place to go home to,' he had selected that 'third path.' And 'Nanashi' had played 'Endless Waltz' on my violin (for me). The solitude in my heart somehow felt soothed. His gypsy style performance was funky-- no, it was cheery as much as it was anything else; it made me feel sad and nostalgic. When I was with 'Nanashi,' it felt as though my accursed fate [weren't mine alone], he let me forget the loneliness. He, however, probably didn't feel that way. My feelings were one-sided. If possible, I wanted to stay with him forever. But he had gone straight away to Earth with Catherine. We'd just met but there was a gaping hole in my heart (and the wind was blowing through). I got even better at playing 'Scheherazade.'

Not long after, I got a [call] from dear Iria.

"Katrine, I need a favor," the message said. I had cleared all the exercises and bored as I was, received permission from Professor W and Doktor T and headed directly to the Winner Hospital. The favor was visiting with Marine Darlian as she'd asked to be allowed to see her daughter 'Relena.'

"Oh, Relena Darlian!" I had only just now noticed. That (hard worker) for the Mars terraforming, that was Darlian's daughter. In retrospect, it's pretty obvious, but I hadn't imagined the mother of Relena, who was in the frozen capsule, was still alive. What's more, I couldn't believe that the lady (herself) had been awakened 239/1/1 < 2/1.

"How have you been, Relena?" Ms. Darlian was still calling me [Relena].

"I am Katrine, Ms. Darlian....."

"My legs have become completely weak....." she was using a wheelchair to move around but the lady had lost none of her elegance. I'd heard from Iria that it was probably impossible for her to walk on her own two feet again. Due to her long hospitalization and Mars' [weak] gravity, her muscles and bones had been weakened. When the mask-clad Relena announced her candidacy in the Mars Federation's presidential election, I and everyone else had been skeptical. But when I heard her pledge that she'd take off the mask "when the election was over", I thought she might be the real deal. In fact, the unmasked face was unmistakably Relena ([as] I confirmed via the history records). Nevertheless, that didn't pacify the skeptics. It's possible to perfectly replicate [someone's looks] with plastic surgery and I couldn't ignore the possibility that she was a clone. But I thought there was no fooling the mother who had raised [her]. In my case, although Ms. Darlian had mistaken [me for Relena], there was (that much more) unrest in (the pretenders [meaning Katrine's]) that the truth couldn't be concealed. I accompanied Ms. Darlian to the Mars Federation capital, Relena City. That day, an inauguration parade was being held on a grand scale. Ms. Darlian and I leisurely watched the spectacle of Relena's limousine passing by. A few meters ahead, the limousine suddenly came to a halt.

"Mother!" Disentangling [herself] from the SP who [tried to] hold her back, President Relena ran as a little girl [might run to us]. "Mother! It's Relena!"

It was then that, right before my eyes, a miracle occurred.

"Relena!" Ms. Darlian got up from her wheelchair. The young girl and the mother who raised her met again after so many decades; they had tears running down their faces as they embraced. "I'm sorry, Relena..... I've caused you painful thoughts (just for my sake)."

"No, mother..... I'm delighted to get to see you again, grateful from the bottom of my heart."

I just stood by watching in amazement. Yet intuition told me their innocence and their tears were genuine. There could be no mistake: they were Marine Darlian and Relena Darlian. And a feeling I had forgotten long ago came back to me. That is, the memory of Iria hold me like (that). Feeling loved. Loving. I had utterly forgotten. Just for that, I was grateful to the two Darlians.

That evening, I was invited to the presidential residence. The cuisine that the greatest person on Mars treated me to was remarkably (frugal) and homemade.

"Thank you.... for bringing [my] mother."

"Not at all, I should be the one to thank you." Besides Ms. Darlian, a sister and brother slightly older than me were also seated at the table.

They were Relena's nephew and niece; I was told they were twins. The older sister with beautiful long blond hair was called Naina Peacecraft, the quiet younger brother with black hair was named Milu Peacecraft. They didn't look much alike, so they were probably fraternal twins [#15.5]. Naina looked at me sharply and asked this question:

"Katrine Wood Winner..... Madame is the daughter of a prestigious family, and you seem to be crossing many a dangerous bridge, yes?" It appeared that [she] had looked into my past.

"For the record, I understand [my actions] to be volunteer activities..... 240/2/4-5." As soon as I'd said that, Milu began to chuckle.

"Well, if we're talking about dangerous bridges, isn't President Relena's 'total pacifism' far more dangerous?" He blurted and [tried] hard to hide [his laughing?] 240/2/11.

"It's not funny, Milu!" Naina scolded her [quietly/secretly] laughing brother. "What you just said is inexcusable..... how dare you group her terrorist acts with Miss Relena's sublime ideals!"

"Naina, what Katrine says is reasonable. I would enjoy hearing [her] opinion."

A small smile appeared on President Relean's face.

"Well then, I'll tell you. If the Mars Federation is going to be totally pacifistic, then it's absolutely necessary to have (secret) backing from the United Earth Sphere!"

"I cannot accept that," I was told bluntly, "The Mars Federation has [seceded] from Earth..... you'd do well to remember that."

"But for the sake of maintaining peace!"

"Do you mean to say secret troubleshooting organizations like the 'Preventers' are necessary?"

[She] was cut off by Naina, "The real problem is that [having Preventers] isn't really total pacifism, right?"

The young president sighed deeply, "I believe my old friends are even now continuing on that path," tears welled up in her eyes, "It's like they said long ago: my life is cheap and it's sewer rats like us who fight....." her voice trembled, "but what about their happiness? Surely it can't be painful to keep living in a world of dark shadows [#16]. "I believe a truly perfect peace has no meaning until existences like theirs are gone."

There's no mistaking the morality of sacrificing a minority for the [benefit] of the majority. But it's necessary to have the sacrificing minority agree.

"I agree. If it makes everyone happy, I'll do whatever it takes....." I took pride in never having had 'pride.'

"Step into the light, Katrine..... how many differences are there between you and me? You don't need to think any more painful thoughts....."

"..... but I....."

Milu flitted before me and my voice caught hesitantly in my throat. An angelic smile crossed his face and he [put] both hands to my face.

".....what?" I thought my cheeks were surely turning red.

Milu took off my glasses, "See, just as I thought....." [He] looked intently at me. "You're eyes are more beautiful than the Earth [itself]," and he pressed a violin into my hands.

"....."

Milu didn't say anything more. He seemed pretty much like a silent [type of guy]. It was embarrassing but-- no, because it was embarrassing I started playing the violin. I played 'Ave Maria' in an improvisational style. Milu slowly [started to play] a flute and matched the melody I was playing. I was timid at first but gradually got bolder. I looked at his eyes. His gentle smile was the same. His warm look was dazzling. And the tone of taciturn Milu's flue was very telling. The performance, which was filled with colors, moved on and on, imploring us to follow. I played with all my heart to match the tempo. When the piece changed to minor, I suddenly remembered a feeling that was akin to being enveloped in gentle warmth. It felt exactly as though someone were calling out for me to follow. When I finally thought I'd caught up, he slowed the tempo and this time, it was like [having someone] pressing my back the way the flute now followed [my] violin phrasing. Now, he was telling me to take the lead. I screwed up the courage and took the lead. I ran my bow over the strings feeling embarrassed, like being made to dance in the nude. And yet I discovered a great up-lifting of my spirit. Before I realized it, [I was feeling] the (pleasant) sensation that the freedom of playing straight from the heart [brought]. Suddenly, I realized Milu had stopped playing and was beaming at me. I had been performing solo. Improvising, I had mixed the melodies of Scheherazade and gypsy. I lost my embarrassment. I performed the solo as if to say "This is me." And next, I would [give] him the main melody. "I'm in your hands," I said with a jerk of my chin (and look from my eyes).

"Leave it to me," he said with a nod. Milu's solo continued for fourteen measures. How spirited was the beautiful sound [he made]. His upper register was particularly clear. His performance oozed with his pure/innocent personality. When that melody rose, he signaled me with his eyes. "This is the climax, play with me," he said with a wave of his flute. I accompanied him with my harmony. Milu gave me a little wink; this time, he took charge of the harmony and I played the melody. The tempo increased several times over but there was neither confusion nor a stutter in our performance. We repeated the melody again and again; it was like floating in a unique spiral until we reached the climax. When we reached the pinnacle, he deliberately fell into a slow temp and (made me) draw the melody of the Ave Maria out of thin air. I had a twinge of fatigue that was close to mild dizziness. Relena and Naina and Ms. Darlian applauded us with tears in their eyes. Milu was also clapping.

On second thought, it was really embarrassing. Milu extended his hand and so I shook it. It was warm (and warm). That duet had been my greatest performance. The night was exactly like a dream---

MC-0022 Next Winter

It was getting close to time to play the final movement of the War Sonata. Getting away from the gun Trowa Phobos has leveled [at me] would probably be the most difficult task. I decided to use slightly cowardly means. He ought to only be able to (simulate) as many (patterns) for the future as he could think of. I wouldn't survive this danger if [my plan] wasn't better than what he had predicted.

"Listen, Phobos..... Doktor said this before but, I'm not as nice as I look."

"Don't move..... and don't speak." I looked at the dial of the watch that I was wearing on the inside of my left wrist. Thirty more seconds. "Put your hands up." I did as I was told. Phobos gave me order after order. "Get out of the cockpit."

I made my [own] pulse rate go up, "....." Now, my watch would be able to react to the speed of my pulse [#17].

Twenty seconds later, a beam of light shot out from my watch.

".....!?"

After pushing the self-destruct button, Phobos wrapped his arms around me and he pushed us out [of the suit].

"That hat, it really suited you!" So saying, I put my lips to his. It was my first kiss.

Phobos' eyes got real big, "!!.....?.....?!"

That had probably far exceeded anything he had predicted. The instant we hit the desert, Rashid self-destructed.

"Sorry, Rashid." Using the explosion to my advantage, I ran over to my half-broken hovercraft. In the hangar was the incomplete Prometheus. It was exactly the rendezvous time. Up in the sky, a huge high-speed transport came up. The craft collected me and Prometheus, hovercraft and all. In the cockpit, Naina and Milu were waiting. Milu's smiling face was the same as ever. Naina's face was even cooler than before.

"How about an encore?"

"Roger."

A virtual keyboard had already been set up. I performed the third movement of the War Sonata. The last three minutes thirty seconds of the war began. The remaining mobile doll Maganacs once again stood facing Snow White and Warlock. They'd promised us plenty of time to make our escape.

"They made a neat getaway, huh....."

"..... I underestimated them....."

We could intermittently hear Heero and Duo's conversation.

I had broken from my family.

"Bye bye, everyone....."

Good bye, Quatre.

Good bye, Iria.

"And, I'm sorry....."

Then, I apologized to Milu, "Sorry, Milu."

He blankly cocked his head, ".....?"

"Why apologize to Milu?" Naina asked.

I couldn't say there [on the ship], how Milu wasn't my first kiss.

"Huh. Guess I made a mistake, I did....." I fibbed. But I'd made a decision. [A decision] to help realize Relena's total

pacifism.

***To Be Continued

NOTE: un-flocking this made it "too long" to be posted. The footnotes have been removed and put in a separate post [here](#)